

THE ^{3/}
Covenant of Grace,

A N D

B A P T I S M

The Token of it,

EXPLAINED UPON

SCRIPTURE PRINCIPLES.

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P R E F A C E

T O T H E

R E A D E R.

READER,

I Freely own, that the Force of Education and Prepossession is very great, and acteth insensibly upon the human Mind; especially in Matters of Religion. Infomuch, that had I been educated in different Sentiments, it is possible, this very Book might have been wrote in Support of them, and not of those, which are now therein advanced. This I say, not because I am conscious of writing under any Biais; (I have honestly endeavoured to free my mind from every Prejudice) but with a pure and sincere Intention to dispose you to judge impartially, according to the Evidence produced, without any regard to my Opinion. I am not fit to be set up for a Standard: I am not fond of gaining Followers; I am not worthy to have any; follow Christ.

T H E

COVENANT of GRACE, &c.

THE hebrew Word ברית, *berith*, from which alone the english Word, *Covenant*, is always rendered in the old Testament, may come from ברא, *bara*, to create, as that signifies to put Things into a new State or Condition, by a new *Constitution*, Disposition or *Settlement* of Affairs ; which is also the Sense of διαθήκη, *Covenant*, in the Greek both of the old and new Testaments. This general Notion will naturally include the two principal Acceptations of the Word, *Covenant* : namely, as it Signifies, either a Free, unconditional Donation and Assurance of Blessings from God, which put Life into a new State of Happiness ; or an Agreement or mutual Engagement between Parties, upon certain Conditions, which settles Affairs upon a new Foundation.

In the first Sense, God's Covenant, after the Flood, with *Noah, and his Seed after him*, that is to say, all Mankind, for *perpetual Generations*, (*Gen. vi. 18.—ix. 9, &c.* is to be understood ; namely, as a free and absolute Grant, or Promise, from the sole Pleasure and Goodness of God, that *all Flesh*, notwithstanding the Wick-
edness

edness of the World, should not any more be cut off with the Waters of a flood : but that, while the earth should remain, Seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night should not cease. Of a similar, but much superior Nature, was the Covenant, or free Grant of Blessings, which God at several Times made to *Abraham* ; as *Gen. xii. 2, 3.* in thee, *Abraham*, shall all families of the Earth be blessed. *Gen. xvii. 7.* and I will establish my Covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee, in their Generations, for an everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee. *Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18.* By my self have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy Son, thine only Son : that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy Seed as the Stars of the heaven, and as the Sand which is upon the Sea-shore : and thy Seed shall possess the gate of his enemies ; and in thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed my voice. The same Grant was also repeted to *Isaac* his Son, and to *Jacob* his Grandson, *Gen. xxvi. 4.—xxviii. 13, 14.* This Donation is of the very highest Importance ; and we are all of us concerned in it. I call it the *Abrahamic Covenant*. But at the same time, and by the same free-Gift, God, the absolute Proprietor of all Worlds and Countries, was pleased to invest *Abraham*, and his natural Seed, or Posterity, the Jews, in a Right to the Land of *Canaan*, and in other Privileges peculiar to themselves. *Gen. xv. 18.* In that same day the Lord made a Covenant with *Abram*, saying, unto thy Seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river *Euphrates*, &c. *Gen.*

xvii. 8. *And I will give unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the Land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.* So also Gen. xxvi. 4.—xxviii. 13, 14. This Conveyance, I apprehend, gives the Jews, notwithstanding their present Ejectment, an indefeasible Right to the Land of Canaan, which will hold to the End of the World. I call this *the Covenant of Peculiarity*. Thus, *Covenant*, in the first Sense, is to be understood.

In the other Sense, as a Compact or mutual Engagement between Parties, between Man and Man, or between God and Man, it stipulates certain Articles and Conditions to be performed, in order to an Interest in the Advantages, or Blessings, proposed. “God, on his Part will continue life; if Man, on his Part, will continue to be obedient: but if Man is once guilty of Transgression, his Life is forfeited.” This was the *Horeb-Covenant*, which God *made with the Israelites when he brought them out of the Land of Egypt*, and not before that Time. [Deut. xxix. 1. 1 Kin. viii. 21.] This *Paul*, the Apostle, calls *Law*; and informs us, that it was not given to the *Israelites* as a Rule whereby they might obtain Life; but to shew them the Nature and Demerit of Sin, and to bring them to Christ. Still the *Abrahamic Covenant*, before mentioned, was the Rule of their Justification.

And, as this, the *Abrahamic Covenant*, is the Subject of this Treatise, I shall attempt a further Explication of it by observing;

I. That it included the Seed, or Posterity, of *Abraham*, and gave them, before they were born, a Right to the Blessings of it, as well as himself.

Gen,

Gen. xvii. 7. *I will establish my Covenant,—for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee, in their Generations, to the End of the World.* In like manner, the Covenant with *Noah* and his Sons, after the Deluge, was *established with them, and with their Seed after them, for perpetual Generations, or with all Mankind, and indeed with all Animals upon the Globe, to the End of the World.* Gen. ix. 9—12. This demonstrates, that the Blessings conveyed in the *Abrahamic Covenant*, were such as might be freely, or gratuitously given; or, that they are to be considered only so far as they can be freely, absolutely and unconditionally given: for they must be such as a new-born Child could have a Right to, who could have no Right or Interest in them but upon the Foot of Grace or free-Gift; the very same Foot, upon which the several rising Generations of Mankind, and of other Animals, have an Interest in the Covenant with *Noah*: and upon the very same Foot that every new-born Heir hath a Right to an Estate absolutely given to a Man and his Heirs for ever. It must be a Right of free Donation; because it exists before there is a Capacity of performing any Conditions previous to it. Hence this Covenant takes the Nature of a PROMISE, and is called *επαγγελια*, the Promise, Rom. iv. 13, 14. Gal. iii. 17. [Observe, that in this Verse *διαθηκη*, the Covenant, and *επαγγελια*, the Promise, are Synonymous.]—V. 18. [God, *κεχαρισαι*, gave it freely to Abraham by promise. See Heb. vi. 13.]—V. 21. *επαγγελιαι*, Promises of God. [Observe, in these Texts, the Promise, or Promises of God, are opposed to the Law, in the Sense above explained.] It is called *η ευλογία*, the BLES-

SING, Gal. iii. 14. It is also described as an INHERITANCE, Gal. iii. 18. And they who have an Interest in the Blessings thereof are denominated HEIRS, Rom. iv. 14. Gal. iii. 29. *And if ye be of Christ, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and HEIRS according to the Promise made to him.* See also Heb. vi. 17. All these Expressions in the apostolic Writings relate immediately, and only to the *Abrahamic Covenant*; and do evidently imply, that it is a free Gift from God, the sole Donor of all Being and Happiness.

II. The inestimable Blessings and Promises of Life and Favour, which the Munificence of the most High is pleased freely to bestow, do, in the Nature of Things, strongly oblige to Gratitude and Duty; and have a powerful Tendency, under our present Darkness and Deficiencies, to fill the Heart with Comfort, Joy, and good Assurance. What more desirable and joyful than to be assured, that the all-powerful, wise and bountiful Father of the Universe, will be our God, Father and Friend for evermore? But then such Blessings and Promises must be known, remembered, understood, duely considered and laid to Heart. For Benefits forgotten, Blessings unknown, or not regarded, how great soever in themselves, can make no good Impressions on the Mind. And therefore, when such Blessings are, once for all, granted to all succeeding Generations, as they rise in the World, the Nature of Things requires, that some Method should be devised of preserving the Memory of them in all Generations; that those, to whom they are granted, may enjoy the Consolation and good Hope, which they inspire; and perform the Gratitude and Duty to which they oblige. With
much

much Propriety the Divine Wisdom made the Rain-bow (I suppose, a new Object in the Sky, not seen before) a Token, Sign or Memorial of the Covenant with *Noah*; that they who should be acquainted with that sacred Institution, in every Age of the World, might be sensible of the Mercy of God in sparing and preserving Mankind, and thankful for it. And as the Blessings of the *Abrahamic Covenant* are of the very highest and most excellent Nature, including an Interest in God, as a God, Father and Friend for ever, [*I will be a God unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee*, Gen. xvii. 7.] and a Share in all the Blessings wherewith the Messiah, in the Gospel, hath enriched the World, [*in thy Seed shall all the families, or nations of the earth be blessed*, Gen. xii. 3.—xxvi. 4.—xxviii. 14.] and as these Blessings are in their own nature adapted to produce the noblest Effects of Gratitude and Duty upon the Mind; so it is evidently most expedient, or rather necessary, that the Memory of such a Donation should be carefully preserved to all succeeding Generations, and strongly inculcated upon their Thoughts, by a solemn Memorial, Sign or Token. The Memorial, Sign or Token, instituted for this Purpose, by the Almighty, was Circumcision, a Mark in the Flesh: which was both a Seal, or Confirmation of the free Grant of spiritual and eternal Blessings, even of that *Righteousness of the Faith*, or that Grant of Blessings by Faith, which was given to Abraham before he was circumcised; * and also an Admonition and Instruction in that moral Purity and Rectitude to which the Grace of God obliges.

For

* Rom. iv. 11.

For *Circumcision* was, or denoted, the *Circumcision of the heart*, Rom. ii. 29. This Memorial or Token was to be applied to every male Child, as soon after the Birth as it conveniently could; namely, when it was eight Days old. And thus in every Generation, and in every Family, at the Birth of every male Child, the Interest of that Child, and of that Family, both Males and Females, in the noble Grant of the *Abrahamic Covenant*, was, by a Divine Institution, recognized and assured, and the Duty, consequent to that Grant, was declared. || This Proceedure is founded upon the immutable Nature of Things, and must be allowed to be a great Privilege, for the Reasons already given. Indeed, the Cove-
nant

|| Circumcision is commonly considered as a Yoke, or Burthen upon the *Jews*; which Notion has sprung from *Acts* xv. 1. — *certain men, who came down from Judea, taught the brethren, [the Christians, who had been proselytes of the Gate, before their Conversion to the Gospel,] and said, Except ye be circumcised AFTER THE MANNER OF MOSES, ye cannot be saved*: compared with Ver. 10, *Now therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a Yoke upon the neck of the Disciples, which neither our Fathers, nor we were able to bear*. But Circumcision is not considered here as *the Yoke*, but keeping the whole ceremonial Law of *Moses*; with which the judaizing Christians supposed Circumcision was essentially connected. See Ver. 5. — *there rose up certain of the Sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them, and command them to keep the Law of Moses*. And again, Ver. 24. — *certain, which went out from us, have troubled you with words, subverting your Souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the Law*. The circumcising them, not after the manner of *Abraham*, but after the manner of *Moses*, whereby, as those Christian Pharisees believed, they would be obliged to keep the ceremonial Law of *Moses*, was the Yoke, which they would have put on the neck of the Disciples. But the Apostles discharged such Disciples both from Circumcision, and the Law of *Moses* too, in that Respect.

nant, or Grant, would have failed of its best Effects without it. And thus things stood in the Church and Kingdom of God for about two thousand years, till Christ, the Messiah, came.

The Posterity of *Abraham* by this open and frequently repeated Assurance of their special Interest in God, and in all the Blessings of his Covenant, and by enjoying this Mean of ingaging them to the Love and Obedience of him, were certainly very much distinguished from, and raised above other Nations of the Earth, who were all Strangers to this Covenant. *Ephes. ii. 12.* And we find that the *Israelites* were generally sensible of this, esteemed it as a great Honour, and were very tenacious of it both for themselves, and for their Children. It is on this Account, especially, that they are in Scripture stiled a HOLY NATION, and *people*. And, with regard to Lineage and Descent, as their Children in every successive Generation were intitled to the same Privileges, they, the *Israelites*, are stiled the *holy Seed*, (*Isai. vi. 13. Ezra ix. 2.*) i. e. federally holy, as they were, from their Birth, specially interested in the Covenant of Divine Grace, and appropriated to the Service of God. Accordingly they are said to be *born unto God*, *Ezek. xvi. 20*, and so, were his Sons and Daughters as soon as they were born. On the contrary, the Nations, with regard to this extraordinary Privilege, were in a comparatively low, and less honourable State; which is in Scripture denoted by their being UNCIRCUMCISED, STRANGERS, and UNCLEAN. See *Gen. xxxiv. 14. Jud. xiv. 3. 1 Sam. xvii. 26. Jer. ix. 25, 26. Ezek. xlv. 7. Isai. xxxv. 8. Joel iii. 17. Isai. lii. 1. Ephes. ii. 11, 12.*

It

It was with great Propriety that the Seal of the Grant, or Covenant, was applied to Infants, as it shewed that the Grant was of free Grace. For had they not been allowed to apply the Seal or Token till their Children arrived at Years of Discretion, and had given Proof of their Obedience, then their Obedience would have been the Condition of their Interest in the Covenant: and so the Covenant would not have been of GRACE, but of WORKS. Besides, it must be a great Comfort to Parents, (to Children too, when capable of Reflection) that the Love of God thus met their Children at their Entrance into Life, claimed them for his own, and gave them, as soon as he had given them Breath, the strongest Assurance of his fatherly Blessing, Care and Protection through future Life; which must be a strong Engagement upon Parents to educate their Children in Piety and Virtue; and upon Children to receive good Instructions.

Further observe; That Circumcision did not *confer* the Right to Covenant-Blessings; but only *declared* the Right, which was before conferred by the Grant to *Abraham*. The Right was conferred by the Grant, or Promise: and the Ordinance was only a Declaration, Seal or Confirmation of the Right, which existed antecedently to the Ordinance. Again; All the Seed or Posterity of *Abraham*, both Males and Females, by the Promise made to him, had a Right to the Blessings of the Covenant; and therefore, when the Wisdom of God thought it sufficient, that the Seal should be applied only to the Males, the Right of the Females must, at the same Time, be declared and confirmed. Lastly observe; That Circumcision was the initiating Ordinance;

or the Ordinance that was administred to a Person at his first Entrance into the Church and Kingdom of God: the first visible Pledge and Token of God's Love, assuring him of his Interest in all Covenant-Blessings, and of his Share in all Church Honours and Privileges. And this it declared and signified once for all: and therefore was but once administred, and not repeted afterwards.

III. The *Covenant of Peculiarity*, annexed to the *Abrahamic Covenant*, gave the Jews alone, the natural Descendents of *Abraham*, a Right and Title to the Land of *Canaan*, and to some other Privileges, exclusive of all other Nations. But the *Abrahamic Covenant* itself extended to, and included *all Nations of the Earth*; though God did not think fit immediately, at that time, to reveal and publish it among them. But their Right was given and assured, when God made the Covenant with *Abraham*. This appears from the exprefs Words of the Grant, Gen. xii. 3. — xxii. 18. — xxvi. 4. — xxviii. 14. *In thee, or in thy Seed, shall all the families, or all the nations of the earth be blessed.* And in Gen. xvii. 4, 5. God constitutes *Abraham* the Father, or Head, of many Nations, with reference to the Covenant, which he then made with him, *to be a God unto him, and to his Seed after him*; in these Words: *As for me, behold, my Covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be, with respect to this Covenant or Grant, a Father of many Nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham: for a Father of many nations have I made thee.* Thus the Apostle Paul understood this Passage, Rom. iv. 16, 17, — *who, Abraham, is the Father of us all, both Jews and Gentiles,*

Gentiles, [or the Nations] (*as it is written, I have made thee a Father of many nations*) before him, * or in the Account and Purpose of him, whom he believed. When Abraham stood before God, and received this Grant, or Promise, *I will be a God unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee*, he did not, in the Account of God, appear as a private Person, but as *the Father of us all*; not only of the Jews, but also of all other Nations, who embracing the Promise, as *Abraham* did, should be accepted and interested in this noble Grant, as he was. Thus *Abraham* was the Father of many Nations. And this sufficiently distinguisheth the two Grants, which I call the *Abrahamic Covenant*, and the *Covenant of Peculiarity*. For though they were both granted at the same time, or joined together in the same Deed; yet the one was a Grant to *all Nations*, as well as to the *Israelites*; the other was a Grant to the *Israelites* alone. Nor can those two distinct and different Grants interfere with, or invalidate each other; as they are not in their own Nature opposite or contradictory. The granting to *Abraham* the Honour of having the Messiah descend from him, the Blessing of a numerous and prof-

* κατεναντι, I apprehend, has here the same Force that לפני has in the following Places; and may signify, *in the Sight, Estimation, Thought, Judgment*. Ezra ix. 9. *have extended mercy to us in the Sight of the kings of Persia*. Neh. i. 11. *prosper thy servant, — and grant him mercy in the Sight of this man*. Prov. iv. 3. *tender and only beloved in the Sight of my mother*. —xiv. 12. *There is a way which seemeth right unto* [לפני before] *a man*. So Prov. xvi. 25. — Neh. ii. 6. *Esth. v. 14. it pleased the King, — the thing pleased Haman* † in the Hebrew, *it was good before* [in the Thought or Judgment of] *the King, Haman*. Eccles. vii. 26. *whose pleaseth God* † *be that is good before* [in the Estimation of] *God*.

prosperous Posterity, the Possession of the Land of *Canaan*, is no ways inconsistent with the Grant of spiritual and heavenly Blessings (as we shall find them to be) to the Nations, when the Gospel should be preached to them: but, notwithstanding the former Grant of Blessings peculiar to *Abraham*, this latter Grant to the Nations stands in full Force, as entire and compleat, as if it had stood alone, and nothing besides had been mentioned. Our Lord declared and confirmed the Covenant of Grace to his Apostles, in which they and all Christians, without exception, were interested: and withal gave them the Promise of the miraculous Gifts and Operations of the Spirit; which Promise was peculiar to themselves, or but, comparatively, to a few other Christians. Now it is easy to see, that this latter, and more restrained Promise, did not in any Respect interfere with, or limit the general Promise in the Covenant of Grace. Still that was open and free to all that should embrace the Faith of the Gospel to the End of the World.

And as those two Grants are plainly distinct and unconnected; so Circumcision, the Token, might be applied to either, or both of them, as God should be pleased to appoint. While the peculiar Kingdom of God was confined to the Jewish Nation, and till the *Messiah* came, Circumcision was the Token of both those Covenants. From the coming of the *Messiah*, I apprehend, Circumcision ceased to be the Token of the *Abrahamic Covenant*, and another Ordinance was substituted in the Place of it. Nevertheless, to the *Jews*, it might still remain as a Token of the *Covenant of Peculiarity*.

This

This Distinction also supplies us with a plain Criterion or Mark, whereby we may know, when the *Abrahamic Covenant* is referred to, or included in any Passage of Scripture. For wherever the Salvation of God, or the Messiah's Empire and Influence is said to be extended; or where it is plainly implied, that it should be extended, to the *Nations*, or to *all Nations*, we may be sure that reference is there made to the *Abrahamic Covenant*: there being no other Covenant, or Constitution, of a Spiritual Nature, in all the Scripture, which is expressly said to extend to *all Nations of the Earth*, but that. As in *Psal. ii. 8. I will give thee the heathen* * [the Nations] *for thine Inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* *Isai. xi. 10. And in that day there shall be a branch springing out of the root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles* [the Nations] *seek* [See *Rom. xv. 12.*] *Isai. xlii. 1. Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment* [true Religion] *to the Gentiles* [to the Nations.] *He shall not cry, &c.* [See *Mat. xii. 18.*] *Ver. 6. I the Lord have called thee in Righteousness — and will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles* [the Nations.] *To open the blind eyes, &c.* [See *Luke ii. 32.*] *Isai. xlix. 6. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant*

to

* *גוים* and *עמים*, the Words used in the Abrahamic Covenant, which properly signify, *Nations*, are the very Words frequently in the english Bible translated by, *Heathen, Gentiles*. But, I humbly conceive, the Scriptures would have been more intelligible to an english Reader, if, instead of *Heathen* or *Gentiles*, those two original Words had been always translated, *the Nations*, or *those of the Nations*.

*to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel : I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, [the Nations,] that thou mayst be my salvation unto the end of the earth. [See Acts xiii. 47.] Joel ii. 32. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be delivered, [or saved, see Rom. x. 13.] for in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem [i. e. among the Jews,] shall be deliverance, or Salvation, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant, or residue of the nations, or to all that are afar off among the nations, whom the Lord shall [hereafter] call. [See Acts ii. 39.] Amos ix. 11. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David, that is fallen down, &c. That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen [the Nations. See Acts xv. 14—17.] So also in Zeph. ii. 11. Zech. ii. 11.—ix. 10. Mal. i. 11. These, and other Passages of Scripture, of the like kind, refer to the Grant or Promise made to Abraham, *In thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed : and, A Father of many nations have I made thee.**

IV. This Covenant, the *Abrahamic Covenant*, Grant or Promise was *confirmed*, or ratified, of God in Christ. So the Apostle Gal. iii. 17. *And this I say, or affirm with the greatest Assurance, that the Covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the Promise of no Effect.* The Covenant, or Promise, which the Apostle here speaks of, is undoubtedly the *Abrahamic Covenant* : as appears from the Context ; Ver. 14, &c. *That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, [the Nations] through Jesus Christ ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through Faith.* Bre-

thren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disanulleth it, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He saith, he meaneth, not, unto Seeds, as of many; [i. e. he speaks not of different Sorts of Claimants] but of one Sort of Claimants, And to thy Seed, which is Christ, or such as become Members of his Church by Faith. And this I say, That the Covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disanul, &c. It is plain, he is speaking of the Covenant and Promises made to Abraham and his Seed, as they extend to the Nations. Ver. 14. *That the Blessing of Abraham might come on the Nations by Jesus Christ.* Which appears more particularly from his affirming, That this Covenant or Promise existed four hundred and thirty years before the Law. For that is the Space of Time from the giving of the Law at mount *Horeb*, to the Time when the Promise was first given to *Abraham*, Gen. xii. 3. Concerning which Covenant or Promise the Apostle positively affirms, that it was confirmed or ratified *in, or unto Christ.* * Now whether the Meaning be, that it was confirmed to Christ personally; or that it was formed and settled agreeably to the Scheme of Redemption in him; or that it was confirmed *unto Christ* collectively, *i. e.* unto the Church of Christ, or unto the whole Body of those that believe in him, and hope for the

* The Apostle may allude to the Promise, confirmed by the Oath of God, Gen. xxii. 16, 18, *in thy seed, in Christ, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed:* For what is here confirmed to *Abraham*, is confirmed in Christ, unto Christ, or with respect to Christ, in whom all nations should be blessed.

the Salvation of God through him ; in any possible Sense, this Assertion of the Apostle plainly connects the *Abrahamic Covenant* with *Christ*, or the Gospel, and shews undeniably, that it had respect to the Christian Dispensation. We may advance a Step further, and affirm,

V. That the *Abrahamic Covenant* did include, and is in Substance the same with the Gospel Covenant, which our Lord and his Apostles published to the World. This may be demonstrated by the following Arguments.

I. The Gospel was preached to *Abraham* in the Covenant, or Promise, made to and with him. *Gal. iii. 8. And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen, or the Nations, by Faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all Nations be blessed.* The Sense is this : God having purposed and decreed, in the Fulness of Time, to justify the Nations, or give them a Title to all the Blessings of his Kingdom and Covenant, only upon Faith in his Son Jesus Christ, preached the Gospel, according to which they were to be justified, to *Abraham*, (long before it was preached by Christ and his Apostles,) when he said unto him, *In thee shall all the Families, or Nations, of the earth be blessed.* Therefore, when God made this Promise, he preached the Gospel : and he preached that Gospel according to which we of the Nations are justified, or have an Interest in all the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace : and he preached it with reference to us Gentiles, or to us who are of the Nations ; and to our being taken into the Kingdom of God, as we now are, by Faith in Christ. Therefore the Gospel, which is now preached to us, including all the Blessings, to

which we are intituled through Faith, is the same, in Substance, with the Covenant or Grant made to *Abraham*.

2. From what he had said Gal. iii. 8, as above, the Apostle infers, Ver. 9. *So then they which be of faith*, meaning the Gentiles, or those of the Nations who believe in Christ, *are blessed with faithful Abraham*, i. e. are partakers of the Blessing wherewith he was blessed; as it is below, Ver. 14. *The Blessing of Abraham is come upon us believing Gentiles through Jesus Christ*. The Blessing, which is come upon us through Jesus Christ in the Gospel, was first the Blessing of *Abraham*. But the Blessing which is come upon us through Christ is the Covenant of Grace; therefore it is plain, that the Blessing of *Abraham*, is no other than the Covenant, or Grant of Grace, in which we now stand.

3. The Covenant with *Abraham* was confirmed of God *in or unto Christ*. Now what Covenant was ever confirmed in or unto Christ but the Gospel Covenant of Grace? Not the Covenant of Works, or the Law; nor any Covenant of Peculiarity; but the Covenant of Grace alone. Therefore, as the *Abrahamic Covenant* was confirmed in or unto Christ, that Covenant must be the Covenant of Grace.

4. The Covenant made with *Abraham* and confirmed of God in Christ, hath never yet been disannulled. This the Apostle strongly asserts and proves Gal. iii. 15, 17. *Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man's Covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereunto*. As if he had said; It is a known and allowed Rule in human Affairs, that a Covenant, Gift or Grant to a Man and his Heirs,
if

if it be once regularly made, and duely ratified, so it must stand: no body can render it void, or add any new Conditions to it. And how then can the Covenant, or Free-Gift of God, be disannulled or changed? It was confirmed in the most express and solemn manner; by the Promise and Oath of God, *Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18. By my self have I sworn, saith the Lord, &c.* and by a sacred Institution, Circumcision, which God appointed as a Token and Seal of it, in all Generations, while his peculiar Church and Kingdom was confined to the Nation of the Israelites: and therefore it must always remain the same, without Alteration or Addition. But it might be objected; "God himself did alter it" by the Law, or Horeb-Covenant, afterwards "brought in among the Jews." The Apostle answers positively in the 17th Verse; that the Covenant made with *Abraham*, and confirmed of God in Christ, was not disannulled by the Law, which was not given till four hundred and thirty years after; but the Promise still remained in its full Force and Latitude. For although the Law was a Ministration of Death, condemning every Transgressor for every Transgression, without giving any Hope of Mercy, or Help for Recovery, and so was directly opposite to the Covenant, or Grant of Grace; yet it did not anul or repeal the Covenant of Grace made with *Abraham*: but that Covenant continued still in full Force, even to the *Jews* while they were under the Law of *Moses*; though that Law did curse every one that did not continue in all things, which God therein required. And he gives a clear and sufficient Reason, why the Law did not disanul the Covenant of Grace: namely, because the Law was

not intended to be the Rule of *final* Justification to the *Jews*, by which they were to stand or fall finally, and for ever; but it *was added because of Transgressions*, (Ver. 19.) to shew them the heinous Nature and Demerit of Sin; the Curse, the Punishment and Death to which they rendered themselves obnoxious by Sin. And so the Law, (Ver. 24.) by it's Severity, served as a School-master to bring them to *Christ*; that is to say, to make them sensible how much they stood in need of Grace, or pardoning Mercy; to teach them to value it, to seek it, and humbly rely upon it. In this View, the Law was so far from disannulling the Covenant of Grace and Mercy made with *Abraham*, that it was in fact subservient to it, as it directed and obliged the sensible, penitent Jew to rest all his Hope and Dependence upon that Covenant.

Thus the Apostle expressly affirms, and strongly argues, that the Covenant, or Grant of Grace, made to *Abraham*, hath never yet been disannulled; no, not by the Law, that Ministration of Death, but still remains in its full Force, and Latitude. And wherefore does he thus argue? I answer, he argues thus, to prove, That *the Blessing of Abraham is come on us Gentiles*, pure and neat, unaltered and entire, in no Respect disannulled, *through Jesus Christ*; as he himself declares, Ver. 14. Therefore, it is certain, that the Blessing of the Covenant of Grace, which is now come upon us *through Christ*, or by the Gospel, is no other than the ancient Blessing contained in the Covenant made with *Abraham*.

5. The Apostle argueth in the fourth Chapter to the *Romans*, That *Abraham* was justified by Faith, as we are: and he argueth this to shew, that

that we have an Interest in the Covenant, or Blessings of the Gospel in the same way that *Abraham* had. And upon this Ground, and for this Reason, he calls him *the Father of us all*, Ver. 11, 16; and declareth, that we are his *Children*, Gal. iii. 7; *the Seed of Abraham*, and *Heirs according to the Promise*, made to him. Gal. iii. 29. But how should we be his Children and Seed, after and from him inheriting the Promise, if the Promise to us, is not the same as the Promise to him? If, for instance, the Land of *Canaan* only was promised to him and his Seed; and, not that, but the Kingdom of Heaven, or eternal Felicity in the future World is promised to us, how can we be the *Seed* and *Heirs* of *Abraham*? How can we inherit from him, when his Inheritance and ours would be as widely different as Heaven and Earth? Certainly, if we are the inheriting Seed of *Abraham*, the Promise, Grant or Covenant, which we inherit, must be the very same with the Promise, Grant or Covenant made to him. And so the Apostle is most evidently to be understood when he saith, Gal. iii. 29, *If ye be of Christ*, belong to his Church, or profess Faith in him, *then are ye Abraham's Seed, and Heirs according to the Promise*: the Promise; what Promise? Answer; most certainly, the same Promise that is mentioned before, Ver. 18. *If the inheritance be of the Law, it is no more of Promise; but God gave it [the Inheritance] to Abraham [and his Heirs] by Promise*; even by that Promise which (Ver. 17.) *the Law could not disannul*. It is therefore very certain, that the Promise, of which we are now Heirs under the Gospel, is the same Promise which God made to *Abraham* and to his Seed after him, Gen. xvii. 7.

6. Again; the Apostle maintains, that *the Promise to Abraham, and to his Seed was not through the Law*, (Rom. iv. 13.) but *by Faith*. And why by Faith? He giveth the Reason Ver. 16. *Therefore it is of Faith, that it might be by Grace: to the end that the Promise might be sure to all the Seed; not only to that Seed which is of the Law, namely, the Jews; but to that also which is of the Faith of Abraham, namely the believing Gentiles, or such of the Nations as we Christians are.* The Promise therefore, or Covenant made to *Abraham*, is as sure to us *now* who believe in *Christ*, as ever it was to the *Jews*, his natural Descendants. For upon the Principle of Faith, it is sure to *all* the Seed, believing *Gentiles*, as well as believing *Jews*. But what is it, that, upon our Faith, is sure to us now, under the Gospel? Answer; the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace. Consequently, the Covenant of Grace, in which we are now interested, and the Promise to *Abraham*, must be one and the same. For there is but one Covenant or Promise sure to us upon our Faith in *Jesus Christ*. Again;

7. The Apostle argues, That Abraham, in the Design and Intention of God, when the Covenant was made with him, stood before God, not in a single, personal Capacity, but as *the Father*, or Head, of *us all*; that is to say, of believing *Gentiles* as well as of the *Jews*. And he quotes the Words of God himself in Proof of this. Rom. iv. 16, 17. —*who is the Father of us all, (as it is written, I have made thee a Father of many nations) before him, or in his account, whom he believed, even God, &c.* Which Words, *I have made thee a Father of many nations*, as they stand in Gen. xvii. 4, evidently have relation to
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the Capacity in which *Abraham* stood before God, when he made the Covenant with him. *As for me*, saith he, *my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be*, with respect to this my Covenant, a Father of many nations. Ver. 5. *Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham, for a Father of many nations have I made thee*, meaning all the Nations, which should embrace the Faith of the Gospel. Hence it follows, according to St. Paul's Sense and Meaning, that as *Abraham* stood before God, when the Covenant was made with him, as our Father and Head; so we, in effect, stood before God in him: and the Promise, which was made to him, was, in effect, made to us also. Which Promise, then made to us in our Father *Abraham*, we now inherit through Jesus Christ, and a professed Faith in him.

8. Let us turn our Thoughts to *Heb. vi. 13. &c.* *For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Ver. 14. Saying, surely blessing, I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee, &c. Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, [a Promise and an Oath] in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong Consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.* Here the Apostle considers the promise as made, and solemnly confirmed to *Abraham*, (*Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18.*) with a View to shew unto the *Heirs of the Promise* the Certainty and Stability of God's gracious Purpose concerning our everlasting Salvation; that we, that all Christians, might have strong Consolation in
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laying hold upon the Hope of eternal Life, which is set before us. Now I would fain know, what Right we have, or what Right any Christians in the Apostle's Days had, to draw Consolation, with regard to the Hope set before us, from the Promise made to *Abraham*, if that Promise was not the same in Substance, with the Gospel Covenant, which sets before us the Hope of eternal Life? Surely, if we have a Right to derive strong Consolation from the Promise to *Abraham*, in reference to the Hope of eternal Life, and as it is confirmed by a solemn Oath, then it must be true, that Christians are interested in that Promise, and in the Security annexed to it: and that it doth contain the whole of the Gospel Covenant; even the blessed and glorious Hope of eternal Life; and consequently, all spiritual Blessings necessary to prepare us for it.

Here note; That the Apostle considers the Covenant, at several times declared to *Abraham*, in the 12th, 17th and 22d Chapters of *Genesis*, as being one and the same Covenant. For he argues from the several Declarations of the Covenant in those Chapters, in the same Manner, and for the same Purposes. And the repeated Declarations of the same Promise, I suppose, is the Reason why the Apostle speaks in the Plural, when he means only the *Abrahamic Covenant*; [*Ephef. ii. 12. Covenants of Promise,*] for the believing Gentiles had no Concern in any other Covenant but that.

9. Lastly, let me open another View in which the Apostle represents this important Affair, *Rom. xi. 17. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive tree wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the root*
and

and fatness of the olive tree. The good olive tree, (as it is called Ver. 24.) is the Church, or peculiar Kingdom of God; the *Branches broken off*, are the unbelieving, rejected *Jews*; the wild Olive grafted into the good Olive among the Branches that were not broken off, are ourselves, the idolatrous Gentiles, or Nations, who are admitted into the Kingdom of God, out of which the unbelieving Jews were ejected. And whereas it is said, that in this happy Situation we partake of the Root and Fatness of the good Olive, the plain Meaning is, that we are interested in all the Blessings and Privileges of the *Abrahamic Covenant*. For the Root of the good Olive is *Abraham*, upon whose Faith and Obedience the peculiar Church and Kingdom of God was planted; and the Fatness, or Oil of the Olive Tree is the Covenant of Grace, made with him and his Seed; which like a generous Sap rises into, and enlivens all the Branches, even those of the wild Olive now ingrafted upon the good old Stock.

Thus it is sufficiently evident, beyond all doubt, that the Gospel Covenant, which we are now under, is the same with the *Abrahamic Covenant*. For the Gospel was preached to *Abraham* when the Covenant, or Promise, was made to him. That Covenant was confirmed of God in Christ; and was never yet disannulled. Through Christ the Blessing of Abraham is come on us Gentiles; by Faith in Christ we are the Seed, the Children of *Abraham*, inheriting the Promise made to him; that Promise is as sure to us as to his natural Descendants, the *Jews*; When the Covenant was made with *Abraham*, he stood before God, not in a private Capacity, but as the Father of many Nations, as the Father of us all.

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We have all a Right to draw Consolation and Encouragement from the Promise to *Abraham*, and from the solemn Oath of God, by which it was confirmed. Lastly, the Promise to *Abraham* is the Oil or Fatness of which we are Partakers, as we are ingrafted into the good Olive Tree, the Church of God. All this gives me full Satisfaction, "That the *Abrahamic Covenant* still subsists in its full Force; and that it "is the same with the Gospel Covenant, which "we are now under." Hence we may truly conclude,

1. That Circumcision was a Seal of the Covenant of Grace, as it was a Seal of the *Abrahamic Covenant*. Some assert, "that it was a "Sign only of the *Covenant of Peculiarity*, and "related only to the *Jews* inheriting the promised Land, the Land of *Canaan*." But the Apostle *Paul* understood it otherwise; *Rom. iv. 11. And he, Abraham, received the Sign of Circumcision, a Seal, or Confirmation, of the Righteousness of FAITH, which Righteousness, or Grant of Blessings, he had being yet uncircumcised, that he might be the Father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that Righteousness might be imputed to them also*, as it was imputed to him. Here it is certain; that *Abraham* had Righteousness, Justification, or a Grant of Blessings, before he was circumcised; and it is evident, that this Righteousness was no other than the Promise or Covenant which God made with him; for it was OF FAITH; a certain Mark of the Gospel Covenant, which the Apostle always argues and strenuously maintains, both in *Abraham's* Case and our own, is not of *Works*, but of *Faith*. Again; with respect to this Righteousness,

ness, Abraham was the Father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that is to say, the Father of us believing Gentiles. And to us this Righteousness is imputed as well as unto him. For the Apostle tells us below, Ver. 23, 24. that it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus from the dead. Now, the Righteousness, or Grant of Blessings, with respect to which Abraham is our Father, and which is imputed to us, as well as to him, is doubtless no other than the Covenant of Grace, as we have proved. But Circumcision was the Seal or Confirmation of this Righteousness, or Grant of Blessings. And therefore it is certain, that Circumcision was a Seal, not of the Covenant of Peculiarity only, or of the Grant of the Land of Canaan; but also, and at the same time, of the Covenant of Grace, even of that Covenant in which we now stand. St. Paul indeed tells the Galatians, Chap. v. 2, 4, that if they were circumcised Christ would profit them nothing; and that they were saved from Grace. But this is not to be understood absolutely; as if being circumcised was, in itself, inconsistent with Gospel Grace, and an Interest in it: For then, Christ, or Gospel Grace, could not have profited any of the circumcised Jews, who believed in Christ; no, nor the Apostle himself, who was circumcised. This Passage therefore must be understood according to the Sense and Principles of the Judaizers, who insisted, that the Gentile Converts should be circumcised after the manner of Moses. Those Converts had been baptized after the Manner, or Rule, מושפּט by which Abraham was circumcised: but this would

would not do ; they must also be circumcised after the Manner of *Moses* ; that is to say, so as to bring themselves under the Law of *Moses*, both ceremonial and damnatory. Upon which Principle, they must fall from Grace, and Christ would profit them nothing. It would have been, as if a condemned Felon should choose to put himself under the Law, which condemns him ; rather than accept the Grace of the King, who is willing to pardon him.

2. As the foregoing Considerations do demonstrate, that the Gospel Covenant, or Grant, is comprehended in those very extensive Promises to *Abraham*, IN THY SEED SHALL ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED ; and, I WILL BE A GOD UNTO THEE, it follows ; that those Promises, (however imperfectly understood by the Jews, under their lesser Degree of Light,) do include all the Blessings, that are freely bestowed upon us in the Gospel, as they are displayed at large by our Lord and his Apostles : namely,
 “ An Interest in all the Perfections of God, as
 “ our God, Father and Friend ; in the Care and
 “ Protection of his Providence, and in all the
 “ Provision made by his Wisdom and Goodness
 “ for our eternal Salvation ; namely, our Elec-
 “ tion, our High-calling to the Kingdom and
 “ Glory of God, our Adoption, the Mission,
 “ Exaltation and Intercession of Christ ; Freedom
 “ of Access to the Throne of Grace, the Remis-
 “ sion of Sin, Assurance of Acceptance ; the In-
 “ structions of God’s Word, the Benefit and
 “ Comfort of his Ordinances, the Assistances of
 “ his holy Spirit ; the Resurrection from the
 “ Dead, and the Inheritance of eternal Life ; and
 “ any other Benefits and Advantages we enjoy
 “ through

“ through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Blessings infinitely great, far above all the Glories, Treasures, Honours and Delights of this World : and, when we have gained a just Sense of them, and have faithfully improved them, will be the Admiration and Joy of our present Life, and our unspeakable Felicity in that which is to come. Blessings, which God alone can bestow ; and he alone can inform us whether or no he will bestow them. The whole of our Existence is in his Hands, and, as he thinks fit, he may sink or raise, increase or diminish, prolong or cut it short. Therefore, though we may form Conjectures, yet God alone can certainly inform us, what his Designs and Intentions are concerning our Being. And as we have all sinned, and come short of the Glory of God, this must necessarily render our Expectations of Happiness much more uncertain and precarious, even supposing we are sensible of our Guilt, and sorry for it. For how can we be sure, that the Sovereign will pardon Sin ? How shall we know in what Way, upon what Terms, or in what Degree, *i. e.* how far he will pardon it ? Will he extend our Life no further than the narrow Limits of this present Time ? Or shall we receive it again from his Hands in some future State ? In what State ? In what Circumstances ? For what Length of Duration ? for ever, or only for a limited Period ? These are Enquiries in which, above all others, we should be desirous to be satisfied. But here all the Wisdom in the World cannot help us out. No Reason, no Thought, no Sagacity of Man, can possibly penetrate into the Counsel of God’s Will, with respect to our forfeited Being. He alone must inform and satisfy us in the forementioned

tioned Points. For they are all lodged entirely in his own Breast. — And hath the Sovereign Lord of all informed us? — Yes; blessed be his holy Name, he hath. — Where has he informed us? — In the Covenant of Grace; which is the same as a Deed of Gift, or a Grant of Favours and Blessings from God. There he hath declared and assured, greatly to our Comfort and Joy, what Mercy he will shew; what Advantages, Honours and Enjoyments his Munificence will bestow; and what his Will and Pleasure is in relation to our Being and Felicity; where, and how, and how long it is his Pleasure we should live. Therefore, this Covenant of Grace, or Deed of Gift, is of infinite Importance to every Soul of us; of as much Importance as our very Life and Being, under the Advantage of being raised to a very high Degree of Perfection; for it is giving us our Being over again, with very great, and indeed unconceivable additional Blessings, by an express and solemn Grant. It is the *magna charta* of our Existence and Happiness in the World of Glory to all Eternity. It is the great Subject of Revelation; the Gospel, the good News from Heaven, which Jesus Christ our Lord came into the World to publish; the *new Testament*, or that most excellent Deed of Gift, which he confirmed and sealed with his own Blood; and of which he is the Mediator, Agent or Negotiator; This Covenant is the glad Tidings of Salvation, which the Apostles preached to the Nations; it is the Day-spring from on High, which has visited us Gentiles, who sat in Darkness and the Shadow of Death, *Strangers to the Covenants of Promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.* This is the Love of God,

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the unfearchable Riches of Chrift. To keep a Sense of this alive upon our Hearts is the Defign of all Gospel Inftitutions; and not without Reason; for this is the very Basis and Ground of all our Life and Hope, of all our Purity and Peace, Comfort and Joy; without which both this, and the other World are Error and Confusion, Darknefs and Death.

VI. And all this Blessedness our God and Father of his mere Grace hath bestowed upon us as freely and generously as he hath given us our Breath and Being, the Light of the Sun, and the common Accommodations of this present Life. It is an entailed Inheritance, which, by a solemn Grant, he has annexed to our Being, and to which we have a Right as Heirs to an entailed Estate: a Right which, in itself, comes to us clear, full and certain by the Free-Gift of God; and therefore is the Object of the strongest Faith and Assurance. It is our Birthright (*Heb. xii. 16, 17.*) to which we and our Children were born; and to which we have a Right as soon as born. For the Gospel-covenant made with *Abraham*, was not only made with him, but also with his Seed for ever. It was a Grant to him and his Heirs, infomuch that every one of his Heirs had a *virtual* Right at the time when the Grant was made, and an *actual* Right to the Blessings of it so soon as they came into Being. And therefore his Heirs are to be considered as Parties in the Covenant as well as himself. But this Point will be better understood if we premise a few Reflections upon the *Capacity of Infants*, and the *Nature of Covenant-blessings* conveyed to them.

1. As to the Capacity of Infants, the common Sense and Practice of all Mankind agree and allow, that Infants are as capable of some Rights as adult Persons themselves. That Privileges and Immunities may be granted to Heirs and Descendents for ever is universally known and confessed. The great Charter of *England*, made and confirmed about five hundred years ago, at that Distance of Time gave and conveyed to us the national Privileges and Liberties we now enjoy, and to which we every one had a Right the very Moment we breathed in English Air. In the same Manner, Blessings and Privileges of a spiritual Nature might be conveyed by the Covenant with *Abraham*. For it was not a Compact or Agreement between Parties present, mutually consenting and restipulating upon certain Terms and Conditions : but it was a Deed of Gift, from the sole Favour and Bounty of God ; which, therefore, would have been valid to all the Parties, had they *all* been, at that time, ignorant of it. So the Covenant, or Grant to *Noah*, already mentioned, is valid, not only to all Mankind, but also to *every living creature of all flesh, fowls, cattel, and beasts of the earth* ; * which neither are, nor can be acquainted with it. It is here, as in the Case of a *Testament*, or Will ; † where the Right of Legatees is good and valid, though the Legacies were bequeathed without their Knowledge or Privity. Consequently, Infants may have a Right and Interest in Covenant-Blessings ; and also, may have that Right and Interest recognized and confirmed, even while they are Infants, as God shall please to appoint.

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* Gen. ix. 9, 10.

† Heb. ix. 15, 16, 17.

2. But it may be said ; “ Doth not a Grant of
 “ Blessings from God necessarily infer Obliga-
 “ tions to Duty on our Part ? And can any Per-
 “ son have a Part in those Blessings, who doth
 “ not acknowledge and consent to those Obliga-
 “ tions ? But Infants cannot signify their Assent
 “ to, or Compliance with Obligations of any
 “ kind : How then can Infants have a Share in
 “ Covenant-Blessings ? ” I answer ; that it is
 very true, that a Grant of Blessings from God
 doth necessarily infer Obligations to Duty on our
 Part. But then, those Obligations are not *prior*,
 but *consequential* to a *free* Grant of Blessings. The
 Blessings are granted *freely* without requiring,
 before they were granted, any Assent, on our
 Part, to Obligations. So God hath *freely* be-
 stowed upon us all the great Blessing of a ra-
 tional Nature, without any previous Knowledge
 of ours, and therefore, without expecting any
 Assent of ours to Obligations prior to the Dona-
 tion of even so noble a Gift. But when this Gift
 is once bestowed, and we have received it, in
Consequence of such a high Favour and Blessing,
 we are, by the Nature of the Gift, brought un-
 der the strongest Obligations to improve it, as
 soon as we are capable, to the Honour of our
 Creator, by living agreeably to the Laws and
 Dignity of a rational Nature. In the very same
 manner, as an Infant receiveth from God a ra-
 tional Nature ; so he may receive from God, by
 his Free-Gift, any additional, extraordinary Bless-
 ings relating to the Cultivation, Advancement
 and Happiness of that same Nature, without any
 Acknowledgment of, or Consent to Obligations,
 previously to the Donation of those Blessings.
But having been actually invested in such extra-
 ordinary

ordinary and additional Blessings, he must, when capable of Reflection, be *consequently* obliged to be thankful for them, and to live agreeably to them. Otherwise, he cannot have a *final*, and everlasting Interest in them. For this Reason, the forementioned Blessings of the Gospel, or of the Covenant of Grace, as they are freely promised, granted and given, and so far as Infants may be supposed to have an Interest in them, must be considered, as they are plainly enough considered in the holy Scriptures, * as *antecedent, original* Blessings; or as present *Encouragements* and *Privileges*, as *Principles, Means* and *Motives*; which are to be understood, carefully attended to, and faithfully improved by us to the purifying of our Hearts, and the right ordering of our Lives and Conversations. Otherwise we lose the Benefit of them, and shall fail of eternal Salvation. God's Love and Goodness always begins with us; † as it naturally and necessarily must. As we are *Men*, we can have no natural Powers, or Advantages of any Kind, but what he is pleased first, and of his mere Liberality to bestow. As we are *Sinners*, we can have no Hope, no Salvation, but what he is pleased first, and of his pure Mercy to provide, grant and assure. And as an Infant, by the original Gift of God, hath a Right to the Faculties and common Privileges of a Man; which, if he lives, he is bound to improve to the Glory of God, and his own Felicity: so an Infant, by the original Gift of God, may have just the same Right to the Blessings

* 1 John iv. 10, 19.

† See my Key to the Apostolic Writings, Chap. VI, VII, and § 168, 169, &c.

Blessings of the Gospel, considered as present *Encouragements* and *Privileges*, as *Principles*, *Means* and *Motives* ; which, if he lives, he is bound to improve to the Honour of God, and his own everlasting Welfare.

And that, in fact, *Abraham's* natural Seed ; or that Infants descending from him, in the Line of Election,* had a Right and Claim to the Blessings of the Covenant, included in that immense Promise, *I will be a God unto thee*, &c. as well as *Abraham* himself, is undeniably evident from the express Words of the Covenant, *Gen. xvii. 7. I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy Seed after thee in their Generations, for an everlasting Covenant ; to be a God unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee.* It is also evident from Circumcision, the Token, Seal or Confirmation of the Covenant, as it was applied to every Male Infant, in every Family, in every Generation ; whereby the Interest of every such Infant in the Covenant of Grace was denoted, declared and assured. Circumcision, which was a Seal or Confirmation to *Abraham* of the Gospel Covenant, or of the *Righteousness*, Justification, or Grant of Blessings, which he had conferred upon him, through Faith, before he was circumcised ; (*Rom. iv. 11.*) was also a Seal, or Confirmation of the same Gospel Covenant, or Grant of Blessings, to all his Posterity, as soon as they came into Life, for about two thousand Years, till the *Messiah* came. And when the *Messiah* was come, he published, and with his Blood ra-

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tified,

* Note : the peculiar Privileges of the *Abrahamic Covenant* did not immediately descend to every Branch of *Abraham's* natural Seed, but only to that Branch, for which God, in his Purpose of Election, designed them : as the Apostle well argues in *Rom. ix. 7, &c.*

tified, no other but the *Abrahamic Covenant*, of which Circumcision had so long been the Seal, as we have already proved. Every one therefore who embraced the Gospel, which Christ and his Apostles preached, was taken into the *Abrahamic Covenant*: and if so, certainly their Seed, or Children, were also taken into the same Covenant with them. For the *Abrahamic Covenant*, into which they were certainly taken, must be to them and their Seed, as well as to *Abraham* and his Seed. Otherwise, they could not have been *Heirs* according to the Promise made to *Abraham*, as the Apostle expressly affirms they were, *Gal. iii. 29. If ye be Christ's, or of Christ, i. e. if ye be his professed Disciples, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and Heirs according to the Promise, made to him and his Seed.* Consequently, according to the Rule and Tenor of that Promise, it is entailed upon us Christians; and our Seed are Heirs of the Blessing in the same Manner as *Abraham's* Seed was.

Besides, the original Covenant with *Abraham* was never yet *disannulled*. Even the Law, in its own Nature, directly opposite to it, could not disannul it, as we have already seen; and how then should the Gospel, the Dispensation of Grace, disannul it? It was, when originally made with *Abraham*, confirmed of God *in, or unto, Christ*. Therefore *Christ* could not disannul it without contradicting himself, and disannulling his own Constitution. There was indeed a Change of Dispensation when *Christ, the Messiah*, came; and the Testament, or Covenant, of which he was the Minister, was the *new Testament in his Blood*; not as if it never before existed; but as it was more clearly and fully explained, by all
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the illustrious Displays of divine Grace, and stript of all the Jewish Peculiarities annexed to the former Edition of it. Circumcision, in particular was abrogated, at least to the Gentile Converts: but that did not abrogate, nor in the least alter or affect the Covenant itself. Because Circumcision was no Part of the Covenant; but only a Sign, or Token of it: and a new Token might be appointed, without the least Change in the Covenant itself. The *Abrahamic Covenant* never was, nor can be disannulled. But if our Seed were now excluded from the Blessings and Promises of it, the Covenant would be disannulled to them, as much as it would have been to *Abraham*, and his natural Descendents, had either He or they been afterwards excluded out of it. It would have been a cutting off of the Entail, established by the Promise and Oath of God; and *so far*, a rescinding of the Covenant itself. Which is absurd.

Further; If the Children of Christians are not now taken into Covenant with their Parents, it is worse with them since the coming of *Christ*, in respect to their Seed, than it was before: and the Church of God, instead of being a *Gainer*, would, in this respect, have been a *Losser* by the Coming of *Christ*; and the Grace of God, and the Blessings of his Covenant, would have been less assured, and less extensive to us under the Gospel, than it was before to the *Jews*. And those *Jews*, who then embraced the Gospel, finding the ancient and invaluable Grant so altered, that God indeed was *their* God, but not the God of their *Children*, could not but see themselves in a more discouraging, and under a less gracious Dispensation than before. Their

Children would not have been admitted into the Kingdom and Church of God upon Earth, nor considered as sharing with them in the Honours and Privileges thereof, but as being Aliens and Strangers to the Covenant of Grace, and in the same dark and uncomfortable State with the *Heathen*, the *uncircumcised* and *unclean*. This must have been a very obvious and strong Objection against the Gospel Dispensation; which the unbelieving *Jews* could not but have observed, and which they would not have failed to have improved against it. But there is not the least Hint or Intimation of this in any Part of the Apostolic History or Writings. We may therefore assure ourselves, that the *unbelieving Jews*, the bitterest Enemies to the Gospel, and who kept a watchful Eye upon the Apostles, and their Doctrine, and Practice, could find no Handle against it in this Respect; and that the *believing Jew* found both himself and his Seed included in the Covenant as before, and possessed of even greater spiritual Advantages and Encouragements.

But here it may be urged and insisted, “ That
 “ we produce express Scripture Evidence for the
 “ Covenant-Right of Infants now under the
 “ Gospel, where is it ever said in all the *new*
 “ *Testament*, that the Infants of Believers are
 “ born with a Right to Covenant-Blessings? And
 “ shall we be wise above what is written?” I
 answer; if the *new Testament* were wholly silent
 upon this Head, this, instead of being an Argument
 against, would be a good Argument *for*
 the Covenant-Right of our Infants; and the
 proper Demand is not, *Where are they said in the*
new Testament to be admitted? But, *Where are they*

in the new Testament said to be excluded? For if they are in the *new Testament* no where excluded, it is certain they are admitted; since it is evident from the Scriptures of the *old Testament*, that they were comprehended in the original Grant to *Abraham*, which is the same as the Gospel Grant or Covenant, declared by our Lord and his Apostles in the *new Testament*, and continued so for about two thousand years. Therefore the proper Question is, *When were they cast out of the Gospel Covenant?* And supposing the new Testament to be entirely silent, the true Answer, for that very Reason, is, NEVER. They were never cast out, nor ever can be; as that original Grant never was, nor ever can be disannulled. We want no exprefs Command in the new Testament to admit Infants into the Covenant of Grace: for their Admittance was exprefsly settled and *confirmed of God in*, or unto, *Christ*, long before *Christ* came into the World. And if it had been his Mind and Meaning, when he came into the World, That Infants, who had so long in every Family of the Jewish Nation been solemnly regarded as Members of God's Church, and Parties in his Covenant of Grace; should then be deprived of that Privilege, and be unchurched and uncovenanted for the future, to the End of the World, he should, and certainly would have told us so, in Terms the most clear and exprefs. But as he has not done this, nor indeed *could* do it, their Right still remains good and firm. And the very Silence of the new Testament, were it altogether silent, is a Proof of this. For had our Lord revoked the Covenant Interest of Infants, is it possible the Scripture should never mention it? no Apostle question, or discover it?

it? None of the *Jews*, who had been so long in Possession of it, and among whom every Man, by the Appointment of God, carried a Token of it in his own Body, ever object or remonstrate against the Gospel on this Account? They were heinously offended merely at laying down the use of the old Seal of the Covenant, Circumcision, in the Case of only the Gentile Converts: and would they not have been much more disgusted, and have opened more loudly against the total uncovenanting of their own Children, which must be vastly more disagreeable, than only laying aside the old Seal; and that only to the *Gentiles*? Had Children been cut off from their ancient Right, surely it would have been one of the greatest Questions in the Apostle's Days, and would have been as clearly decided as the Question about Circumcision, *Acts* XV. And yet we never find the least Word, or Syllable of an Objection upon this Head. The believing *Jews* never once scruple it; the unbelieving never charge it upon the Gospel; the famous Council, *Acts* XV, take no manner of Notice of it. And what can the Meaning of this profound Silence be? The Meaning is evident; because the Thing, especially where both Parents were Christians, was never denied, doubted or questioned; but was allowed, granted and acknowledged on all Hands. In short; the Right of Infants to the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace, is solidly proved from the Scriptures of the old Testament: and the true Question is, when were they struck out of the Covenant? When was their Right and Privilege revoked? When was the great Charter of Heaven (delivered and sealed to *Abraham*) altered, or rescinded in this respect? And the

the true Answer is, NEVER ; *nor ever will, nor ever can be.*

But the Demand of plain Scripture Evidence, in this particular Case, reaches further, and lies much deeper, than one would, at first, imagine. It supposes, that we can have no Evidence in this Point, but from the new Testament. The new Testament is detached and separated from the Old, as a Constitution entirely new, and quite distinct and different from it. That we can prove little or nothing about the Covenant of Grace from the old Testament ; which is considered as superseded and abrogated by the New, and of no Force, nor Weight, in explaining the Gospel, or the Gospel Constitution of the Kingdom of God. And therefore, every thing relating to the *Abrahamic Covenant*, is diminished, and accounted of no Force or Sense equal to the Nature of the Subject. But this is a great Mistake ; and doubtless the Ground of all the Uncertainty in some, as well as of all the Error in others, about the present Interest of Infants in the Covenant of Grace. The old Testament is either overlooked, or considered as of no Weight in settling of Gospel Principles. Whereas, on the other Hand, the old Testament is essentially necessary to the Explication of Gospel Principles, which we can never fully understand, unless we understand the natural and indissoluble Connection between the two Dispensations, which were both formed by the Wisdom of God, to carry on the same great Design, from the Beginning of the World. For Christ *verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, though he was not manifested 'till in the last times.* The New Testament therefore is not a Dispensation

tion entirely new, quite separate from, and independent of the preceding Dispensation ; but it is the Continuation, and further Illustration of it. Nor doth it reveal another and different Covenant ; but the ancient Covenant, made in *Christ* with *Abraham*, more clearly explained, and still more strongly enforced. To see clearly the Harmony and Correspondence between the two Dispensations, the Apostles by the Spirit, poured out upon them, received *the Word of Knowledge*. * And by the Inspiration and teaching of this Spirit, they always explain, prove and establish every Gospel Principle. Especially, in relation to the Rights and Privileges of us Gentile-Christians, they always do argue, as we have already seen, from the old Testament, and the *Abrahamic Covenant* ; for they had indeed no other Scriptures to argue from. And doubtless, had this Point ever been questioned in their Times, they would have argued from the old Testament just as we do : for we argue precisely upon their Principles. The old Testament was the only Scriptures which our Lord expounded to his Disciples, when he shewed them the Things relating to himself, Luke xxiv. 27. *And beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself.* These are the Scriptures which he exhorteth the *Jews* to search, and declares that *they are they that testify of him*. † Therefore, Evidence, drawn from the Scriptures of the old Testament, is both necessary and sufficient to establish our Sentiments

* See my very good Friend Doctor *Benson's History of the first planting the Christian Religion*, Vol. I. P. 46.

† John v. 39.

ments of the Gospel, even supposing the New Testament upon some Points were altogether silent. For it was no ways necessary to repete and particularly inculcate, what was clearly declared and established before. However, the new Testament is not altogether silent upon the present Subject, the Covenant-Right of Infants. For, besides the Evidence already produced, our Lord declares of *little Children*, that of *such is the Kingdom of Heaven*; * owning and blessing them as Members of his Church and Kingdom. And the Apostle also affirms, in a Case, where the Covenant-Right of Infants might be doubtful, that the Children, even where only one of the Parents is a Christian, are *holy*. † The Case was this: when either the Husband or Wife was a Heathen, and the other a Christian, the Christian might be unwilling to cohabit with the Heathen, through an Apprehension, that such Cohabitation would be prejudicial to the Covenant-Right, or Christian Privileges of their Offspring. You need not, saith the Apostle, be scrupulous on this Account: *For the unbelieving, or Heathen, Husband is sanctified, or to be considered as a Christian, with respect to his Issue, by the wife, and the unbelieving wife, in like manner, is sanctified by the Husband*: if it were not so, the Children of such Parents would indeed be *unclean*, or in the State of Heathens, Strangers to God's Covenant; *but now are they holy*, or born Members of the Christian Church; HOLY in the same Sense in which the Scripture represents the *Israelites*

* Mat. xix. 14.

† 1 Cor. vii. 14. See Mr. Locke's Paraphrase upon this Text.

Israelites and their Children to be *holy*, as they were God's People, and interested in the Covenant of his Grace. I do not see how it is possible any other Meaning should be given to this Expression. Hence I infer, (1.) That Christians in the Apostolic Times, had a Sense of the covenant Privileges of their Children, and were thoughtful about them. (2.) That where both Parents were Christians, the Christian State, or Covenant-Right of their Children was not questioned. (3.) That, even when either of the Parents were Heathen, it was the Apostle's Sense, that, notwithstanding, the Covenant-Right of the Children was not affected by it, but remained good and sure. From this Passage it appears to me, that the Apostle judged the Children of Christians to be in Covenant with God, in the same Manner as the Children of *Israelites* had before been, as clearly and fully as if he had wrote a whole Volume to assert and prove it.

But it may be further urged, " That Faith
 " and Repentance are expressly required of those
 " that under the New Testament are taken into
 " the Gospel Covenant. Now, as Infants can
 " neither believe nor repent, they cannot be ta-
 " ken into it, or interested in it." I answer.
 This Objection would be valid, if we either affirmed or supposed, That Infants were, or might be the *first* in a Family, to whom the Grant or Conveyance is made. But, in this Case, Infants cannot be the *first* in a Family, that have a Covenant Right. For if we Christians are *Heirs according to the Promise* made to *Abraham*, as the Apostle assures us we are, * then we and
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* Gal. iii. 29.

our Seed must inherit the Promise, by the same Rule, and in the same Order, as *Abraham* and his Seed. By which Rule and Order, *Parents who believe* must be *first* in the Covenant, and the Childrens Right must result from the Right of such Parents. *Abraham* believed God ; and God made the Promise to him and his Seed after him : and so, his infant Seed, in every rising Generation, were circumcised in Token of their inheriting the Promise from him. And, agreeably to this Rule and Order, during the Mosaical Dispensation, every Profelyte from among the Heathen must profess Faith in the true God, and Subjection to his Government, before he could be circumcised, or taken into the Covenant. But when He, the first in the Family, was so taken into the Covenant, his infant Seed, in following Generations, was circumcised, in Token of their Right, derived from their Parents and from *Abraham*. So also, by the same Rule and Order, when the Apostles preached the Gospel among the Gentiles, or Nations, all the *first* Converts must believe, and renounce Idolatry, before they could be taken into the Christian Church and Covenant of God. And when any of the Jews were admitted into the Messiah's Kingdom, they must profess Faith in him, and Subjection to his Government. This was a Qualification as necessary, as that a Man should have Eyes to enjoy the Benefit of the Sun. For what Advantage could the Gospel be to those, who had no Notion, Intention or Desire relating to it? And, observe, it is of those *first* Converts alone, the first in a Family, who embraced the Gospel, of whom the Scripture speaks, when it makes Faith and Repentance necessary to their
Right

Right and Admittance into the Church and Covenant : “ nor is there any one single Instance to “ be found in Scripture of any but such.” But then the Right of Inheritance immediately resulted and devolved to their Children from the Right of their Parents, *according to* the known Rule and Order of *the Promise*, in which God made over himself to be their God, and the God of their Seed ; as he had done to *Abraham, and his Seed*. Nor indeed is there any one Instance to be found in Scripture to the contrary. But to proceed.

The Right and Interest of Infants in the Covenant being thus established, we may now advance to the Inference which naturally results from it ; namely, “ That the baptizing of such Infants is “ a warrantable Practice.” But here it is proper to premise a few general Remarks concerning the Nature of Baptism. As

1. That Baptism is a Token or Sign of the Covenant, or Grant of Blessings in Christ ; and nothing but a Token or Sign. When we are baptized *into the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, that Action doth not give us an Interest or Right in Covenant-Blessings, but only signifies and declares the Interest and Right we already have in *the Love of God, the Grace of Christ, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost* ; or in all Covenant-Blessings. Even as Circumcision was a Seal of that Righteousness, or Grant of Favours, which *Abraham* had before he was circumcised. It is the *Promise*, which giveth the Right ; and the Seal, or Token, confirms it. Therefore, those Expressions, *Be baptized for, or into, the Remission of Sins ; * be baptized and wash*

* Acts ii. 38.

wash away thy Sins, † cannot be understood as if the mere Act of washing, or baptizing, removed the Guilt, or procured the Pardon of Sin : but only that it signified, that Sin was washed away, or pardoned, by the Mercy of God, to such as did sincerely repent ; yet so, that if any Person had refused to have been baptized, it could not have been supposed that their Profession, or Repentance, was sincere ; nor, consequently, that their Sins were forgiven. Consequently, I remark,

2. That Baptism doth not bring the Person baptized under new Obligations to Duty, but only signifies the Obligations which the Love and Goodness of God have already brought him under. In short, Baptism doth not make any Alteration in the religious State of the Person baptized ; but only signifies and declares that State of Favour, in which he is already placed by the free Gift of God in *Christ*.

3. Baptism is now the initiating Ordinance, as Circumcision had been before : that is to say, it is the Ordinance that is administered to a Person at his first Entrance into the Church and Kingdom of God ; the first visible Pledge and Token of God's Love, assuring him of his Interest in all Covenant-Blessings, and of his Share in all Church Honours and Privileges. And this it declares and signifies once for all ; and therefore is but once administered, and not to be repeated afterwards. This is allowed by all Christians.

4. Observe ; Baptism declares and signifies an Interest in Covenant-Blessings, not as they are immediately

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† Acts xxii. 16.

mediately connected with *eternal* Salvation, but as they are *present* Privileges and Advantages: or as they are *Principles, Encouragements, Means* and *Motives* freely given on the Part of God to all Christians, *antecedently* to a Life or Course of Obedience; and, on our Part, to be understood, considered and improved, so as to excite and induce us to a Life of Obedience. Or; Baptism signifies our having passed out of the State of *Heathenism* into the *Christian* State; or into the Church and Family of God; and our being obliged to live accordingly. Which if we do, we are happy for ever: if not; neither Baptism, nor any other Christian Privilege, will be of any Avail.

These Things premised, I reckon we have now laid a very just and solid, rational and intelligible Foundation of *Infant-Baptism*. For if the Infants of believing Parents, or professed Christians, have a Right to Covenant-Blessings, they must have a Right to the Sign or Token of the Covenant, whereby their Interest in those Blessings is solemnly recognized and declared. They who have a Right to the Promise, have a Right to Baptism. For so the Spirit of God expressly declares, *Acts* ii. 38, 39, *be baptized every one of you, — for the Promise is to you, and to your children*. A Place in the Church and Family of God is one Covenant-Blessing; therefore as the Infants of professed Christians are *born to God* * in his Church and Family, they enter into his Church and Family as soon as born: and therefore the initiating or entering Ordinance is, at least, as properly and usefully applied to them
now,

* *Ezek.* xvi. 20.

now, as it was under the preceding Dispensation. Nor do we find any thing in the Gospel, which deprives either Children or Parents of the Honour and Benefit of it; but all the Principles, upon which it ought to stand, are there affirmed and established.

But some of our Christian Brethren, and fellow Protestants, whom we ought to love and esteem, are in a different way of thinking; and judge, that Infants are by no means proper Subjects of Baptism. We must therefore, in Justice to ourselves, as well as to them, consider what they have to offer. And this will oblige me to enlarge upon, and further explain what I have already advanced.

Now our Brethren, who disapprove of Infant-Baptism, allege and argue; “ That no Book or
 “ Parcel of Scripture teaches this Practice. That
 “ we have no Precept nor Precedent in Scripture
 “ for giving Baptism to any but the adult upon
 “ their Profession of Faith and Repentence.
 “ That our Lord, in the Commission he gave
 “ his Apostles, * *Go, teach all nations, baptizing*
 “ *them*, &c. made none the Subjects of Bap-
 “ tism, but such as are likewise made the Sub-
 “ jects of Instruction: by which Infants, who
 “ are incapable of Instruction, are necessarily ex-
 “ cluded. That accordingly the Apostles first
 “ preached *Christ*, and then administred Baptism
 “ to them only that believed. They first *taught*,
 “ and then baptized those who received their
 “ Doctrine, and no other. Besides, Infants are
 “ not capable of answering the Ends and Inten-
 “ tion of Baptism, which is, *walking in newness*
 D 2 “ of

* Mat. xxviii. 19.

“ of Life, and the Answer of a good conscience to-
 “ wards God, which adult Persons are only ca-
 “ pable of. Nor can that be any ways profit-
 “ able to us which is done in our Infancy, with-
 “ out any Knowledge, Choice or Consent, of
 “ our own. Infant-Baptism therefore frustrates
 “ the Ends and Intention of Baptism, is vain
 “ and insignificant, Infants being wholly unca-
 “ pable of understanding and improving it.”

This, so far as I can learn, is the Substance of what our Brethren allege against Infant-Baptism, and the whole Force of their Arguments ; saying that they bring several Instances of apostolic Practice to corroborate what they affirm ; namely, that the Apostles did first teach, and then baptize those who received their Doctrine.

And now the first Thing I, for my own Part, have to say to all this, is ; that if these Arguments did appear to me to be conclusive, I would freely and openly acknowledge it ; and, without any Delay or Reserve, would persuade Christians to lay aside an unscriptural Practice. But the Evidence of Truth obliges me to profess, that these Allegations are very far from being satisfactory to me ; for the following Reasons.

1. As to what is urged from our Lord's Commission, and the Practice of the Apostles ; we know our Lord did command them first to *teach all nations*, in order to bring them to the Knowledge and Faith of the Gospel, and then to *baptize them*. And how is it possible the heathen World should ever have been brought into the Church any other Way ? The first Converts and Profelytes could be admitted only upon their professed Faith and Repentence. Here both Parties are agreed, and this stands good upon

our Principles as well as theirs. For the *Teaching* of the first Converts, and their Admission upon their professed Faith, is not in the least inconsistent with the Childrens Right afterwards resulting from the Right of their Parents, according to the general Rule and Order of the Promise. It was not inconsistent with such Right of Children, when Profelytes were *circumcised*; nor, for that Reason, could it be inconsistent with their Right when first Converts were *baptized*. For first Converts might be *taught* and *baptized*, as well as first Converts had been before *taught* and *circumcised* without infringing upon any Right or Privilege of their Children. Nor is it here by our Lord, or elsewhere by his Apostles, ever said, or intimated, that *only* adult Believers were baptized, and no other. Our Lord's Commission, therefore, is not at all inconsistent with our Sentiments: On the contrary, I am very sure, that he hath, in that Commission, established them; as it is certain, that our Lord there commissions his Apostles to preach and execute the *Abrahamic Covenant*. For, preaching the Gospel, or Salvation of God, through *Christ*, the *Messiah*, to all Nations, is the express and peculiar Criterion, or Mark by which that Covenant is distinguished in Scripture; there being no other Covenant, of a Spiritual Nature, which in Scripture is expressly said to extend to all Nations of the Earth. The Words of the Covenant are, *in thy Seed, [Christ] shall all the Families, or Nations, of the Earth be blessed.* Gen. xii. 3. — xxii. 18. — xxvi. 4. — xxviii. 14. — and [with respect to my Covenant] *thou [Abraham] shalt be a Father of many Nations. — for a Father of many Nations have I made [constituted]*

thee, Gen. xvii. 4, 5. And when our Lord, just before his Ascension, gave Commission to his Apostles, he expressed himself after this Manner, *Luke xxiv. 46, 47. Thus it is written*, [in the Scriptures of the old Testament] — *that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his* [Christ's] *name, among all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem*, Mark xvi. 15. *And he said unto them*, [his Apostles] *Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature*, [to all Mankind.] *Mat. xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in, or into, the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* In this Commission, therefore, our Lord plainly refers to, and executes the *Abrahamic Covenant*, or Promise, according to which *all the nations of the Earth* were to be blessed in him, or to have the Blessings included and granted in that Covenant, bestowed upon them; and with respect to which, *Abraham* was constituted the Father of many Nations. In this Commission He orders and authorizes his Apostles to publish that very Covenant, and those very Blessings entire and unaltered: for neither he nor his Apostles, either here, or in any other Part of Scripture, ever give the least Hint or Intimation, that it was altered, or disannulled in any respect whatsoever, either as to the *Matter* of the Grant, or any of the *Parties* to whom it was originally conveyed. Only instead of *circumcise*, he saith *baptize*; which no ways, either as to *Matter* or *Subjects*, affects or alters the Covenant; but only the Token, Memorial, or Seal of it. It is indeed most absurd to suppose our Lord either could or would, in any wise, change or anul that Covenant, which, when first made, was *confirmed of God in*,
or

or unto, *himself*, when he was actually executing it. He could not diminish any of the Blessings or Privileges with which *all Nations* were to be blessed in him, at the very time when he was accomplishing that Promise in its fullest and most extensive Sense under the Gospel. Therefore, when our Lord ordered his Apostles to preach, and *teach all nations* according to the *Abrahamic Covenant*, he must order them also to *baptize all Nations* according to that Covenant. For he could not commission them to preach upon one Plan, and baptize upon another. Now we know, that according to the *Abrahamic Covenant*, both the Blessings and the Token of them were granted to Children, as well as to Parents. And so the Apostles would naturally understand the Commission. For they, and all the Jews, had always, upon a Divine Warrant, considered Children as included with the Parents in the Covenant, and intitled to the Token of it.

2. And accordingly we find that the Apostles did so understand our Lord; and did not only preach, but also baptized according to the *Abrahamic Covenant*. For in the first Sermon preached by an Apostle, after our Lord's Ascension, (Acts ii. 38.) St. Peter hath those remarkable Words; *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost. For the Promise is to you, [Jews,] and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, [among the Nations] even as many as the Lord our God shall call.* Now if we consult Joel ii. 32, to which Place the Holy Ghost in the Apostle refers, we shall find, that the Promise is, not only of the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, but of the *whole* Gospel Sal-

vation, or the Covenant of Grace. For so it runs. *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever, Jew or Gentile, shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be delivered, or saved, [with the Gospel Salvation, Rom. x. 13.] For in mount Sion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, or Salvation, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant, or those that are afar off, the Gentiles, or Nations, whom the Lord shall hereafter call into his Church and Kingdom.* Now by this certain Criterion, that the Promise referred to, did extend to those that *were afar off*, or to the Nations, whom the Lord should call into his Church and Kingdom, it is evident, that this Promise is no other than the Covenant, or Grant, to *Abraham*; according to which, the Lord had said, that *all the Nations of the Earth* should be blessed in Christ; both the *Jews* in mount *Sion* and *Jerusalem*, and the *Remainder*, that were then *afar off*, namely, us *Gentiles*, whom the Lord graciously intended to call by the Preaching of the Gospel. This is the grand Promise to which *Joel* refers. And this Promise being to our Seed, or Children, as well as to us, the holy Spirit declares they were to be baptized. *Repent, and be baptized every one of you, — for the Promise is to you and to your Children.* And every thing in *St. Peter's* Discourse must be understood in Consistency with this. It is said below, Ver. 41. *Then they that gladly received his Word were baptized.* But such Expressions here and elsewhere, must not be understood in Opposition to, or as excluding their Children; for both having a Right to the Promise, doubtless both were baptized: But manifestly, such Expressions are to be understood in Opposition to, and as excluding such of the Apostle's Hearers

ers as disbelieved, or rejected his Word ; that is, the unbelieving and impenitent part of his Audience. They that believed, and gladly received his Word, separated themselves from those Auditors, who continued in Unbelief and Impenitence, and were baptized, and so joined themselves to the Apostles ; as it follows (Ver. 41.) *and there were added to them about three thousand Souls. And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayer.* This way of speaking therefore doth not point at the Exclusion of Infants, but of Infidels only. * And this being the first Time of the Apostles preaching and baptizing, after they had received the Commission, it may pass for a fair Comment upon it.

3. And in the next Sermon, the Apostle again points to the *Abrahamic Covenant* as the Ground of his preaching the Gospel even to the *Jews*. Acts iii. 25. *Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the Covenant which God made with our Fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy Seed shall all the nations of the Earth be blessed.* And we may be sure, that this Covenant, which the Holy Ghost dictated as the Ground of his Preaching, or offering the Gospel to the *Jews*, was also the Ground and Rule of his baptizing such as were converted by his Preaching.

4. And in preaching to the *Gentiles*, or the Nations, the Apostles could act only upon the Foot of the *Abrahamic Covenant* ; there being in
Revelation

* Nor must that Passage in *Acts* viii. 12, be understood exclusively of Children. — *they were baptized both Men and Women* ; that is to say, Women as well as Men, Females as well as Males : whereas Males only had the initiating Ordinance applied to them under the preceding Dispensation.

Revelation no other Constitution by which the Nations could be received into the peculiar Kingdom of God ; and consequently, they must act upon the same Foot in baptizing Converts, or taking them into the Church. For they could not preach upon one Principle, and baptize upon another.

5. Add to this, the Intimations we have of Apostolic Sense and Practice ; as

1. That the Apostles baptized Believers and their Households, or Families. *Acts* xvi. 15. Lydia and her Household were baptized by *Paul* ; and (Ver. 13.) so was the Jailer and all his ; and (1 *Cor.* i. 16.) so was the Household of *Stephanas*. It may be said ; “ Infants are not necessarily included in Households.” Nor are they necessarily excluded. There might be, or there might not be Infants in those Households ; and we are as much at Liberty to suppose there were, as that there were not. But the Advantage from such general Expressions lieth clearly in Favour of Infants. For when *Abraham* was circumcised, his whole Household was so too, none but Females excepted. And so when a proselyted Heathen was taken into the Jewish Church, he and all the Males in his Family were circumcised : and moreover, the learned in Hebrew Antiquities inform us, that they were also *baptized* ; and that this was a common and ancient Practice among the Jews. * I doubt not but it was, as I have reason to believe it was a Divine Institution. For the Gentiles, under the Mosaic Dispensation of the

* See Dr. Lightfoot's Harmony of the New Testament, in Vol. I. of his folio Works, P. 209, 210. and Reland's Heb. Ant. P. 254, 255.

the Kingdom of God, are in Scripture declared to be **UNCLEAN**. *Isai.* xxxv. 8. — *lii.* 1. *Acts* x. 28. — xi. 3, 8. And as they had neither learned, nor observed the Mosaic Distinction of Things *clean* and *unclean*, they and their Children must be supposed to be under every Kind and Degree of Uncleanness, of which they were capable. And therefore they could not then be taken into the Church of God, or admitted into the Sanctuary, unless they were first washed, or baptized. For under that Dispensation, by the Divine Command, those Persons, that were unclean, even among the circumcised Jews, (much more among the Gentiles) must first be washed, before they could go into the Sanctuary, or eat of the holy Things. *Lev.* vii. 20, 21. — xiv. 8. — xv. 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16, 18, 21, 22, 27, 31. — xvii. 15. — xxii. 3, 6. By which Law, a Gentile, being possibly unclean in every Kind and Degree, could not be allowed to come into the Temple, *Acts* xxi. 28, 29. Therefore, by Divine Institution, every Gentile Profelyte, and all the Males in his Family, young and old, must not only be circumcised, but moreover all of them, both Males and Females, must also be washed, or baptized, * in order to their being admitted into the peculiar Kingdom and Church of God, while it was confined to the Nation of the Jews. † Thus, for about fifteen hundred years,

* The Apostle giveth all those ceremonial Washings the general Name of *βαπτισμοίς*, Baptisms, *Heb.* ix. 10.

† Here we may observe the Wisdom and Propriety of our Lord's adopting the Ordinance of Baptism into the Gospel Dispensation. It was the Ordinance, which, together with Circumcision, had been applied to a converted Gentile and his

years, from the giving of the Law at Mount *Horeb*, to the Institution of Baptism by our Lord, it is as certain, that washing, or baptizing, was joined to Circumcision as a Divine Institution, and applied to whole Families, Infants and others, as it is that any Profelytes of Righteousness, with their Families, were, within that Period of Time, taken into the Jewish Church. And, as in so long a Space of Time, many such Profelytes, and their Housholds, from first to last, must have been taken into the Church, this Practice must have been ancient and common ; and, consequently, well known to the Apostles, and to all the Jews. When, therefore, the Apostles say, that they baptized a Man and *all his*; a Man and *his Household*, this way of speaking would naturally be understood by those, who were acquainted with the preceding Dispensation, as

his Family, when he was initiated, or taken into the Church, under the preceding Dispensation. And as our Lord, omitting the paschal Supper itself, turned the Bread and Cup, in that Supper, to the Purposes of his own Supper, which he substituted in the Place of the Passover : So, omitting Circumcision, he turned the Baptism of profelyted Heathens, which had accompanied Circumcision, into the initiating Ordinance under the Gospel Dispensation, and substituted it in the Place of Circumcision. Which Ordinance of Baptism would readily enough be admitted by the converted, penitent Jews ; who had often before washed, or baptized, on Account of Uncleanness : and also they would all allow, that it was with great Propriety applied to the converted Gentiles, as it was the very Ordinance, which they themselves had always applied to such *Gentiles*, when they were initiated into the Church : Though some of them thought the Baptism of Christian Converts was defective without Circumcision. Hence it is, that we find no mention of any Difficulty or Scruple the Jews had about the Ordinance of Baptism, as instituted by our Lord. It was no new Ordinance to them.

as including young and old, Infants and others. For which Reason, had there been any Alteration in the Subjects of Baptism, the Apostles, to prevent an unavoidable Mistake, would certainly have excepted Infants. But whereas they make no such Exception, but use the common, familiar Language, which every body knew included Infants, we may fairly conclude, they meant, that in those Households Infants also were baptized. And we may further conclude, That Infant-Baptism, in the Case of Profelytes, might be practised for about fifteen hundred Years before Christ came; and that it certainly was practised, as a Divine Institution, as often as any Profelyte, who had Infants in his Family, was taken into the Jewish Church. And this supplieth a sufficient Reason, why Infant-Baptism is not more expressly mentioned in the New Testament. It was well known, and allowed on all Sides. Again;

2. The Apostle directs us to consider *Baptism*, as the Ordinance, which, under the Gospel, answers to *Circumcision*. Col. ii. 11, 12. *In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the Body of the Sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, συστασεις, having been buried with him in Baptism. Circumcised with the Circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in Baptism.* The plain Meaning of which is; that when we are baptized, we are circumcised with the Circumcision of *Christ*, or the Christian Circumcision. Which is said to be *made without hands*, as it is not mutable, * or subject

* Note; Things that *are made*, or *made with Hands*, in
Scrip-

subject to be abolished, but is to subsist as long as the Kingdom of God shall continue in this World; in Opposition to the *Jewish* Circumcision, which he tells us (*Ephes. ii. 11.*) was *made with hands*, because it was originally intended to be abolished, as it was a Token of the *Abrahamic Covenant*, and was then actually abolished to the Gentiles. * The Apostle considers Baptism as answering to *Circumcision*: and, saying that it is applied to both Sexes, it bears, in the main, an exact Correspondence to it. *Baptism* is the Token of the very same Covenant of which *Circumcision* was once the Token; I mean the *Abrahamic Covenant*, which has been proved to be the Gospel-Covenant. Baptism hath a spiritual Meaning; so had Circumcision, it had Relation to the *Heart* and *Spirit*. † Baptism is the initiating

Scripture Phrase are Things of a mutable, dissolvable Nature: as our Lord's earthly Body, *Mark xiv. 58.*—Circumcision, *Ephes. ii. 11.*—the Tabernacle of *Moses*, *Heb. ix. 11, 24.*—the Jewish State, *Heb. xii. 27.*

Things *not made with Hands* are Things not mutable, or not subject to Dissolution: as our Lord's Resurrection-body, *Mark xiv. 58.*—our heavenly House, which shall not be dissolved like our earthly House, *2 Cor. v. 1.* and Baptism, or the Circumcision of *Christ*, *Col. ii. 11.*

* Circumcision, being a Mark in the Flesh, was a very proper Distinction of a peculiar People, while the Kingdom of God was confined to one Nation of the Earth: and, as a Token of the *Covenant of Peculiarity*, it still answers great Ends, by distinguishing and separating the *Jews* from all other People; and, I doubt not, will continue to do so to the End of the World. But when the *Abrahamic Covenant* was to be published among all Nations of the Earth, and all Nations, upon Faith in *Christ*, were to be admitted into it; then Circumcision, which was designed to distinguish and separate but one Nation, could no longer be a proper Token of the *Abrahamic Covenant*: and therefore, with great Propriety, Baptism was substituted in the Place thereof.

† *Rom. ii. 29.*

tiating Ordinance, and in the same Church and Kingdom of God, * in which Circumcision had been before the initiating Ordinance. Baptism is not to be repeted; no more was Circumcision. Such as were the first Subjects of Circumcision, were also the first Subjects of Baptism, namely, penitent Believers. Baptism is a personal and family Ordinance; so was Circumcision, neither of them being administred in the public Church or Congregation, but in private Houses, upon the Road, § or in any place, as it might happen. Baptism was administred to Households at once; so was Circumcision. The Apostle had good reason to consider Baptism as *the Circumcision of Christ*, or as substituted in the Place of Circumcision. And this naturally suggests, that he judged Baptism was to be applied to Infants, as Circumcision had been before. Further,

3. He leads our Thoughts to the same Sentiment, when he affirms, that the Children are HOLY, even where but one of the Parents is believing, 1 Cor. vii. 14. *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.* Here the Apostle uses the Language of the Spirit under the preceding Dispensation. || To our present

* That we, the believing Gentiles, are taken into the same Church, Covenant and Kingdom of God, in which the Jews were before the Gospel-Dispensation was erected, and out of which the unbelieving Jews were cast, is, I think, sufficiently proved in my *Key to the apostolic Writings*, Chap. V. § 81, — 91.

§ Gen. iv. 24, &c. Acts viii. 36, 37, 38.

|| See my Paraphrase upon the Epist. to the Romans, in the *Key to the Apostolic Writings*, Chap. II. § 43, — 46. and Chap. VI. § 124, — 127.

sent Purpose it may suffice to observe, that *uncircumcised* and *unclean* are Terms of the same Import. *Isai. lii. 1. Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: from henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean*; meaning the Heathen, Strangers to God's Covenant. So *unclean*, in St. Peter's Speech, *Acts x. 28.* is the same as *uncircumcised*, in his Accusation, *Acts xi. 3.* Now if *uncircumcised* and *unclean* are of the same Import, by Parity of Reason, *circumcised* and *holy* are of the same Import: for the *Jews* were the *holy Seed* principally as they were circumcised, in Token of their being in Covenant with God; and their being thus *holy* implied, that they were *circumcised*. Consequently, as the Apostle applies the same Term [*holy*] to the Infants of Christians, and in the same Sense, according to the Language of the Kingdom of God, it as naturally implies and supposes *Baptism*, as before it implied *Circumcision*. He that tells us, *1 Cor. i. 16,* that he baptized the Household, or Family, of *Stephanas*, tells us that the Children in such a Family were *holy*: and therefore, as I apprehend, he plainly declares it to be his Sense, that Children in such a Family were to be baptized; and that, if there were Children in the Family of *Stephanas*, he actually did baptize them.

For these Reasons, principally, I can by no means admit the Arguments of our Brethren, who are in a different way of thinking.

But perhaps after all this, some may insist upon an *express Command* for admitting Infants to Baptism. But the Case will not allow the insisting upon this: on the other Hand, it properly belongs to us to insist upon an *express Command* for

for excluding them from Baptism. For they were, by an exprefs Command of God, intituled to the initiating Ordinance, when the Gospel-Covenant was first established in *Christ*; and having enjoyed this Privilege in the Church for about two thousand years, till *Christ* came, as a singular Honour and Advantage, which the whole Nation of the *Jews* was very proud of, there was no need of any other exprefs Command, when *Christ* was come, to admit Infants to the initiating Ordinance, under the same Gospel-Covenant, and into the same Church and Kingdom of God, whatever that Ordinance might be, Circumcision, Baptism, or any other God should be pleased to appoint. For their Right to the initiating Ordinance, at that Time, was questioned or denied by no Body, where the Parents were both Christians. All the Jewish Converts, to a Man, must be strongly prejudiced in Favour of it: it was rivetted into their very Souls; and the debarring their Children from it, would have given them the greatest Aversion to the Gospel. There was therefore no Occasion for another exprefs Command to admit Infants to Baptism; or rather, such a Command would have been superfluous. For why should People be commanded to do what they judge is already sufficiently commanded? what they are already inclined to do, what they are infinitely fond of doing? and what they would think themselves extremely ill used if they were debarred from doing? Indeed had there been any among the *Jews*, as there have been of late Years among Christians, who had taken it into their Heads to seclude Infants from the initiating Ordinance, then we might reasonably have expected, that

our Lord should have made an exprefs Decision in Favour of Infants. But it doth not appear that there was fo much as one Person in all the World, who at that Time, entertained the leaft Thought of fecluding Infants, when both Parents were Chriftians. It is therefore unreaſonable to expect an exprefs, formal Command in the new Teſtament for their Admiſſion. But, on the other Hand, as all the Alterations and Abolitions, made in the preceding Diſpenſation are expreſſly mentioned ; ſo, if it was our Lord's Intention to exclude Infants from a Privilege, which they had been ſo long poſſeſſed of, and which all the *Jews* expected would be continued, and were ſo fond of having continued, then there would have been a manifeſt and ſtrong Neceſſity for a very exprefs, clear and poſitive Command for excluding them. And can any one produce me ſuch a Command for excluding Infants from Baptiſm? No. — No it is impoſſible any one ſhould. I muſt therefore conclude, that our Lord never did intend to exclude them, and that their Right to the initiating Ordinance remains as good and firm as ever it was. Upon the whole ; there is in Scripture the moſt expreſs and authentic Precept and Precedent for admitting Infants to the initiating Ordinance in the ſame Church and Kingdom of God, in which we now are, and under the ſame Covenant of Grace, in which we now ſtand : and Grounds and Principles ſo clear and ſtrong, and ſuch plain and undeniable Intimations of their being admitted to Baptiſm, as, in a Caſe which doth not appear to have been ever diſputed or doubted in the apoſtolic Age, amount to ſuch a Degree of Evidence, as is, in my Thoughts, fully ſatiſſactory, and
equal

equal to that of an exprefs Precept from our Lord, and precedent in the apostolic Practice.

And now I ask leave in my Turn to demand ;
 “ What Precept or Precedent is to be found in
 “ Scripture for Christians bringing up their
 “ Children to Years of Maturity before they be
 “ baptized ? ” Perhaps it will be replied, “ It is
 “ sufficient that we have no Precept nor Prece-
 “ dent in Scripture for giving Baptism to any
 “ but the Adult upon their Profession of Faith
 “ and Repentence.” But what Adult ? the a-
 dult Children of believing, Christian Parents ?
 No. But adult Converts from among the *Jews*
 or *Pagans*. Such were commanded to be bap-
 tized upon their professed Faith, and all the
 Scripture Instances of Persons baptized upon their
 professed Faith relate only to the *first* Converts
 from among *Jews* and *Pagans*. But for the
 baptizing of adult Persons, born of Christian Pa-
 rents, upon their Profession of Faith and Re-
 pentence, there is neither Precept nor Precedent
 in Scripture ; nor, which is still worse, is there
 any *Principle* in Scripture, from *Genesis* to *Reve-*
lation, which in the least favours or encourages it.
 So that, had we less Scripture-Authority for In-
 fant-Baptism than we have, we should have more
 than others have for their Adult-Baptism : for
 they have none at all. And moreover, they
 seem to me to delay Baptism quite beyond that
 Standard of Profession, which the Scripture al-
 lows ; and to such a Degree of Irregularity, that
 some live and die professed Christians, who yet
 are never baptized at all.

“ But Infants are not capable of answering
 “ the Ends and Intention of Baptism, *Newness*
 “ of Life, and the Answer of a good Conscience to-

“ *wards God.*” But surely *Christians*, and the Children of *Christians*, at Years of Discretion, are as capable of answering the Ends of Baptism by living a virtuous and holy Life, as *Jews*, and the Children of *Jews* were of answering, in the same way, the Ends of Circumcision. For both Ordinances belonged to the same Covenant, and for the same Ends, making Allowance for different Degrees of Light ; in reference to which we have greatly the Advantage.

“ But that can be no ways profitable to us, which is done in our Infancy, without any Knowledge, Choice or Consent of our own. Therefore, Infant-Baptism is vain and insignificant.” Answer ; as to *Choice* and *Consent*, none is necessary, where only a *Free-Grant*, and Obligations resulting from it are recognized and declared. And as to *Knowledge*, the Baptism of an Infant may be very profitable to the Family in the present Administration of it ; and to the Infant himself it may be exceeding useful in After-Reflections. Our Lord applied a figurative Washing to *Peter*, which he then understood not ; but, as it was to be of future Use in the Reflection, it was not therefore *vain and insignificant*. *Job. xiii. 7. Peter said unto him, Dost thou wash my feet ? Jesus answered, — What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.* That *Washing* would be very useful to him *hereafter*, which at the present he was ignorant of : and so may Baptism be to Infants.

Indeed, if we take our Ideas of the Ordinance from the wrong or superstitious Accounts, which some may have given of it, it may be very difficult, if not impossible, to set it in any useful or rational Light. But if we consider it, according

cording to it's proper Nature, as a Token, or Memorial of the free Grant of Life and Pardon, which God in *Christ* has made to a sinful World, it will then appear in a very just and beautiful View.

To have our Minds deeply affected with the Divine Goodness is, on all Accounts, necessary to our own Happiness. He hath freely given us a rational Being, an invaluable Present. To this Gift, even when Mankind had forfeited it, he has, of his own Good-will and Munificence, added the Grant of Pardon to the Penitent, and of eternal Life : a Grant of infinite Importance, upon which the Whole of our Being, and all our Hopes of Happiness do depend ; and of which it is necessary to our attaining the high and glorious Ends thereof, that we preserve a just and lively Sense upon our Minds. For this will warm our Hearts with the Love of God ; excite and animate us to all Right Action ; fortify us against Temptation ; support us under every Trial, and so fit us for immortal Honour and Glory.

Now observe ; those two original Gifts, of a rational Nature, and of Pardon and Immortality, are made known to us in very different Ways. That we are endowed with a rational Nature is known by Self-Perception, and we are conscious to it every Moment. Here, therefore, is no need of any extraordinary Sign or Token to remind us of it. But as for the Grant of the Remission of Sin, and Life eternal, that can be made known to us only by God himself. For, as before observed, no human Wisdom, or Penetration, could have demonstrated it to us. As it was lodged entirely in the Bosom of God, the
Sovereign,

Sovereign, and depended wholly upon his own Grace, or good Pleasure, he alone could revele it to us, and assure us of it. And he hath assured us of it several Ways; of which this is one; namely, That ever since He erected a peculiar Church and Kingdom in the World, he appointed an Ordinance to be applied to the Beginning of Life, as a perpetual Token, Sign and Memorial of this rich and excellent Donation. By which Means, under the *Jewish* Dispensation, it was solemnly recognized and brought to Remembrance in every Generation, in every Family, at the Birth of every *male* Child; that none might be ignorant of it, nor of the Obligations resulting from it. Under the *Gospel* Dispensation, as this noble Grant, or Deed of Gift is, in all Respects, set in a much clearer, and more extensive Light, so in this respect also, that by a solemn Token, Sign and Memorial, it is recognized, and brought to Remembrance in every Generation, in every Family, at the Birth of every Child, both *Male* and *Female*; that none may be ignorant of it, but all understand it, and have their Minds duely affected with it. And will any one say, such an Institution is *vain and insignificant*? Certainly, it is most perfectly agreeable to that great Love and Goodness, which hath bestowed upon us such a surprizing Gift, to take Care that it should be duely, and in a Variety of Ways, published among us, inculcated upon our Memories, and made familiar to our Thoughts, in order to engage our constant, and most serious Regards; without which, the Gift, how valuable soever in itself, would be rendered ineffectual. God is giving, and propagating Life in every Generation:

tion : and it is consonant to the Nature of Things, that we should well understand the happy Terms upon which he bestows it. And therefore, it is very fit, that the Covenant, or free Grant of God in *Christ*, upon which our whole Life and Being, all our Comfort and Happiness, both here and hereafter, do depend, should in every Family, at the Birth of every Child, be solemnly exhibited and declared ; and particularly applied to the Infant newly entered into Life, as having a Share and Interest in it.

On the Part of the most HIGH GOD, nothing could be devised more proper to demonstrate the high Value he sets upon our Nature, and his kindest Regards to the human Race. In this Ordinance we see the great Love wherewith he hath loved us, the Dignity to which he hath raised us, and the Glory which he hath prepared for us. And it must affect our Hearts with Pleasure, when we reflect, that his fatherly Love met us with open Arms at our Entrance into Life, to welcome us into his Creation and Kingdom ; to declare himself our God and Father : *I will be a God unto thee* : to acquaint us that we were born unto him, as his Children, in his Family ; and that we come into the World to honour and enjoy him. How comfortable and encouraging to consider, that in this Institution, our God and Father gave us a visible Pledge and Token, that we have a Share in all the Mercies and Blessings implied in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ; and to assure us (if we improve his Goodness, if we choose, and are disposed for eternal Life) of his Guidance, Protection and Assistance, through all the Duties and Difficulties of this State of Infirmary.

firmity and Trial, till he shall bring us to everlasting Peace and Happiness. This is the Meaning of Baptism : a Meaning of the very highest Significancy and Importance. Thus the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath provided, that we should have a Sense of his Love and our Obligations impressed upon our Hearts.

Here also PARENTS may see, that the regular Propagation of the Species is of infinite Moment, the special Object of Divine Attention and Care, under his particular Inspection and Blessing. Here they may see the great Worth and Importance of their Children, even in Infancy, as being born, not to live the mere animal Life in this World among Men : but to live unto God, and to live with him for ever. They are born in his House and Family, and therefore related to God, their Father, as his Sons and Daughters, under the Care and Protection of his Providence ; to the ever blessed Son of God, their Redeemer, who is the First-born in the Family, and interested in all the Blessings we enjoy through him ; to Angels in the glorious World above ; and to the Saints, the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, even all the excellent, that have been, are, or shall be in this World, and intitled to all the Provision, Means and Assistencies, which they were, or are, in common, favoured with ; as in §. V. All this, as explained in the Gospel, is comprehended in that immense Promise, I WILL BE A GOD UNTO THEE, AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE. This is the Promise of which we are the Heirs. This the Blessing of *Abraham*, which is come upon us Gentiles. IN THY SEED SHALL ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED. None in the Family, where the Infant

is born, questions the Infant's Relation to that Family, and to all that belong to it, at any Distance of Place. It is immediately owned and embraced, as a Son or Daughter, a Brother or Sister, &c. and admitted to all the common Rights and Privileges, and to the Love, Protection and Care of the Family. And, being also born in God's heavenly Family, it is in like Manner, immediately intitled to all the illustrious Relations, Honours, Rights, Privileges and Blessings belonging to that Family. This is the Free-Gift of God : and it is a Gift perfectly worthy of God to bestow. To assure us of this Grace our Lord came down from Heaven ; and it was a Message which required, and was perfectly worthy of such an extraordinary Messenger. And when Parents see all this assured to their Child, the Object of their tenderest Affections, how must it engage their Hearts in Love to God, and oblige, direct and dispose them to bring it up agreeably to such rich Mercy, as a young Angel upon Earth, designed to be an Angel for ever in Glory ? And, as the Powers of Intelligence are, by the Divine Goodness, prepared from the Birth of the Infant, and are ready, from the first Dawnings of Reason, to be formed and improved by the careful Parent ; so these divine, lively and striking Principles, are by the same Divine Goodness prepared, and just as ready as the rational Faculties themselves, to be inculcated by the Parent upon the tender, flexible Mind, as soon as ever a Capacity of Thought will admit ; to form there the noblest Sentiments with respect to its own Being, and the Love of God its Maker, and Father, and to fix the happiest Dispositions for the future Conduct of Life. This

is just as it should be, according to the Truth, or the true Natures of Things. The Spring and Prime of Life is the fittest Season for forming and fixing the best Principles: and as the Infant hath an undoubted Right to the Promises, it must have the same Right to the Use and Application of them, for it's own greatest Benefit, as it is rising up in Life and Understanding. Every considerate impartial Person will acknowledge, that this is a very great Privilege and Advantage in the Education of Children; and that, for these excellent Purposes, a solemn Ordinance is most properly applied to the Beginning of Life: and that it is a Wrong to our Children to debar them from it. Thus Children may be brought up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord; and, as Parents are planted upon the good Olive of God's Covenant, that Tree of Life; so the tender Sprouts, that grow out of their Bodies, may grow up with them in Christ Jesus. And upon the Foot of the Interest of their Children in the Covenant of Divine Grace, declared in Baptism, Parents are encouraged to pray for them in greater Assurance of Faith, and to plead those comfortable Promises of old made to the Seed of God's People: as, *I will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy Seed. I will pour out my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Blessing upon thine offspring. The Seed of the righteous is blessed. They are the Seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.*

The Ordinance also hath relation to the whole FAMILY, where it is administred; and all that belong to it are thereby reminded of the Divine Goodness, which was exhibited to each of them at their Entrance into Life. The Covenant of
Grace,

Grace, and their Interest in it, by a Solemnity, which hath a special respect unto themselves, is displayed before their Eyes; and they behold the Glory of God shining upon the whole House, to revive in their Breasts a Sense of Redeeming Love, and of their Obligations. They are shewn, as in a clear Glass, that they are delivered from the Power of heathenish Darknes, and translated into the Family of God; adopted, chosen, called, freely invited, and made welcome to his glorious Kingdom, and to all the Honours, Blessings and Encouragements of it; being no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God. Moreover, the sealing and confirming the Covenant to an Infant, incapable of performing any previous Conditions, is a Demonstration, that they are put into this happy State of Grace and Glory by the pure Bounty and Free-Gift of God. And all this, as oft as the Ordinance is repeted in the Family, hath a manifest Tendency to awaken their Attention, to increase their Gratitude and Love, and to excite them to walk worthy of their high Calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Indeed the INFANT itself is, at present, incapable of reflecting upon these Things. But the noblest Materials, included in the Grace of God, then exhibited and assured to it, are provided and ready for Thought and Reflection, as soon as ever the rational Faculties are capable of being exerted; as above observed. And if the Treasures of the Gospel are gradually opened, and presented to View, as the Understanding enlarges, in a Family
where

where the Knowledge and Spirit of the Religion of *Jesus* prevails, the young Christian will be continually improving in such Principles, Tempers and Practice, as will render his Life honourable and useful, happy and comfortable here in this World, and will qualify him for the Glory that shall hereafter be reveled in the Saints.



T H E E N D.



